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ABSTRACT

The past decade has seen a surge in both popular and scholarly work on the issues that affect women's lives. To discover events perceived to have been turning points in the identity formation of Hispanic women, 25 Mexican-American women and 25 Puerto Rican women living in Chicago were interviewed by two female Hispanic interviewers. In addition to demographic information, subjects were asked what events or turning points in their lives made a difference in their feelings and understanding about themselves. A total of 189 events were obtained, with most women mentioning about 5. Two Hispanic women were trained to code the responses into five general categories: (1) relational; (2) work related; (3) educational; (4) personal; and (5) health related. Results showed events involving relationships (marriage, divorce, motherhood) comprised the largest single category of critical events. However, over half the reported critical events involved events other than relational. Results were also compared with those of an earlier study using a sample of black and white women. Overall results point to shared experiences shaping the identities of women regardless of cultural differences. Interview data from the Hispanic study suggest that no single event was critical in shaping the lives of all the Hispanic women. The women saw themselves not only as bicultural but in multi-roles as well. The appendices contain demographic characteristics of the sample, a summary of categories of perceived critical events, and references. (JAC)

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CRITICAL EVENTS SHAPING

THE HISPANIC WOMAN'S IDENTITY

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CRITICAL EVENTS SHAPING WOMAN'S IDENTITY: A HANDBOOK FOR THE HELPING PROFESSIONS. Ideal for "helping professionals" -- those social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and counselors responsible for the delivery of mental health services to women. This resource handbook provides information about those critical events in women's lives that influence their identity in a time of rapid social change.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW

This is a study of the lives of a very special and unusual group of persons. It is also a study of the very special and unusual events in the lives of those persons. The persons whose lives are reflected here are women of Hispanic heritage presently living in the United States. They are women of accomplishment in their personal and family relationships and in their educational and occupational achievements and aspirations.

This work focuses on the important times in the lives of this group of women, on those events which they perceived to have been meaningful in shaping the women they are today. It is a study of changing and emerging bicultural identities.

The past decade has seen a surge in both scholarly and popular materials on women and on the issues affecting their lives and choices in a time of rapid social change. Much research and thinking has focused particularly on the rewards and problems of maintaining commitments to the family and to a career as well, and has been directed primarily to white women. Only recently have these issues been raised in relation to other groups of women within society as we begin to discover the richness and the variety in the contemporary experience of womanhood. What kinds of events have been influential in shaping the identity of Hispanic women? Do those events differ from those which are important to white women, and if so, how? In this study, Hispanic women speak for themselves and describe the critical events in the process of their identity formation.

This study acknowledges both the heterogeneity and the homogeneity of Hispanics. The diversity among persons comprising the Hispanic heritage is expressed in many areas of life. Not only have such persons come from various countries and regions, but the political and economic circumstances surrounding their movement to the United States have been quite different. Further, the traditions influencing the original home culture have roots in other diverse cultures. Nevertheless, while not minimizing the important differences between the various Hispanic groups, there are also common bonds and perspectives based upon language, religion and tradition. Moreover, there are common problems shared by Hispanic persons within the United States as they struggle to move into the mainstream of society.

The women who participated in this study are not representative of the general population of Hispanic women currently living in the United States. In fact, they are unique because of their accomplishments. These women and others like them are and will be the leaders of Hispanic organizations and

efforts now and in the future. As Hispanics become the largest minority in the United States, women like those in this study will give voice, heart and hand to the struggle for social justice. These women may be considered the foremothers of subsequent generations of Hispanic women as increasingly larger numbers seek further education and move into occupations within the mainstream of society. They are models for the future, role models for younger Hispanic women and girls and also models to be understood and appreciated by educators, social service providers and researchers with the larger society.

IDENTITY AND CRITICAL EVENTS

Identity and its meanings dominate the thoughts of twentieth century men and women. Not only do the mass media daily recount the experiences of adults defining and redefining themselves as spouses, parents, workers and citizens, but also on a broader scale emerging nations, ethnic groups, and even professions and institutions are caught up in the process of defining their identities. Our individual and collective fascination with who we are and who we might become indicates an awareness of alternatives together with the freedom to pursue those alternatives that are unique to this era.

How is it that we become who we are? Somehow nations, ethnic groups, and each individual man and woman arrive at a point where they can differentiate between "what is me" and "what is not me." What is the nature of that process and what are the critical points in that process?

Identity is defined as the state or fact of remaining the same one under varying aspects or conditions. It is the condition of being oneself and not another. Although the work of Erik Erikson (1968) fails to consider important sex differences in the identity formation process, nevertheless it provides a base for current understandings of the meaning of identity. Simply put, identity refers to the degree of similarity between "who I think I am" and "whom others think me to be." Identity refers to a kind of relationship between self-perceptions on the one hand and the perceptions (and expectations) of others on the other hand.

Thus the maintenance of a stable personal identity depends upon consistency and continuity of both interpersonal relationships and the situations (home, work, etc.) in which the individual interacts with others. However, for many adults, and particularly for women, at this point in history, both personal relationships and the situations in which they act are constantly changing. These changes, more often than not, necessitate redefinitions of identity.

Although the identity formation process is continuous, in the life of every person there are particular critical events so powerful in nature, so pervasive in scope, as to challenge existing assumptions about self, roles and relationships. Critical events provide the occasion for the redefinition of identity. Erikson (1968) refers to such events as turning points or critical moments when previously held notions about self are called into question. Something happens, something powerful enough to cause the person to ask, "who am I now?" There is the sense that "who I was before" is no longer adequate to meet the demands of the new situation.

Critical events disrupt the equilibrium of identity. It is precisely at these times that the individual is open to change, to new insights, awareness and self-understandings, to new experiences and actions, and to previously unimagined dimensions of self on the one hand, but equally vulnerable to fear, anxiety, depression, immobilization and rage on the other. Critical events must produce some change in the original identity. These events can be maladaptive and lead to retreat of frustration, or they can be growthful and inaugurate a new sense of efficacy, a reaffirmation of self, and movement toward a higher level of personal integration and differentiation.

The critical events described in this study elucidate the dynamics of the lives of contemporary Hispanic women and thereby challenge popular images based on myth and stereotype. The study's methodology and information on the demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Chapter 2. Findings for the total group are discussed in Chapter 3, followed by a consideration of cultural differences in Chapter 4. Conclusions and implications will be found in Chapters 5 and 6. Complete data on demographic characteristics and on the critical events is contained in the appendixes.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

This study was essentially a replication of an earlier investigation of perceived critical events in the lives of black and white women reported in Critical Events Shaping Woman's Identity: A Handbook for the Helping Professions (Avery, 1980). The methodology has been revised on the basis of evaluations of the original study and as necessary for use with Hispanic participants.

This chapter will present the procedures through which the critical events material was obtained. Selection and training of the interviewers and steps in the analysis of the interview material also will be discussed.

Insofar as possible, the design of a study fits its goals. The goal of this investigation was to discover those events perceived to have been turning points in the identity formation process of Hispanic women and to do so with a methodology reflecting careful attention to the present social context of research on Hispanic women.

Considerations of the status of Hispanic women are informed by viewing them as being both women and Hispanic. For the researcher who would study Hispanic women or any other minority group, there is the central methodological problem of determining the conditions under which the participant is most likely to provide the researcher with information which accurately reflects perceived experiences.

One of the characteristics of members of minority or other low status groups is their tendency, resulting from years of socialization, to discount the value of what they know about themselves from their own experiences. Often minority group members themselves have given more credence to the notions of members of the high status group about who and what they are and should be, than they have to knowledge derived from their individual and collective experiences. In the hierarchy of knowledge about low status groups (women, for example), not only is what is known by women and what is known about women devalued, but what women know about women is devalued most of all and frequently dismissed as folk lore, "woman talk," not only by serious scholars, but also by women themselves who have internalized the values of the larger society. However, it is precisely that body of knowledge which women through their individual and collective experience know about women, which, if brought to light, can inform the counseling and therapeutic practice of members of the helping professions and render them more able to meet the needs of their women clients. The importance of this investigation of critical events shaping the Hispanic woman's identity lies both in the sources of the information and in the procedures used.

SELECTION OF INTERVIEWERS

Fifty interviews were conducted by two Hispanic interviewers. Both interviwers were women. Similarly in terms of ethnic background, Mexican-American women were interviewed by a Mexican-American woman interviewer and Puerto Rican women were interviewed by a Puerto Rican woman interviewer. Both interviewers were recommended by Hispanic members of the helping professions after reviewing the purposes and procedures of the study. Both were fluent in Spanish and English.

For indepth, semi-structured interviews, the qualifications for a good interviewer are communication skills, such as a capacity for empathetic listening, reflection of thoughts and feelings, ability to focus the participant's attention on a particular theme until it has been explored thoroughly as well as to pose open ended questions causing the subject to reflect more deeply upon experiences.

A final qualification for the selection of interviewers was that they be in positions within the community to have access to a wide range of potential participants, since the interviewers were responsible for locating and identifying women to be interviewed. For this reason, interviewers were active in community life, holding memberships in a variety of Hispanic groups and networks from which the participants were drawn.

TRAINING OF INTERVIEWERS

The training focused almost exclusively on the conduct of these particular interviews and less emphasis was placed on interviewing techniques in general. Although there is little research to substantiate just what kind of interviewer training is most effective, the Handbook of Social Psychology (1968) suggests including some of the following topics with varying emphasis depending upon the goals of the particular project: the purpose of the study; the role of the interviewer; description and demonstration of interview techniques; practice and evaluation; review and assessment of interview forms and protocols; demonstration of practice interviews; and discussion with colleagues in a non-judgmental, accepting atmosphere.

The training sessions included a thorough orientation to the goals, objectives, and procedures of the project and to the intent and purpose of the Women's Educational Equity Act, as well. The interview structure was thoroughly reviewed with the two interviewers. Particular attention was devoted to the definition of terms and to establishing interviewer consensus on the meaning of terms such as behaviors, feelings, thoughts, coping strategies and so forth.

A Category of Response Questionnaire along with an evaluation form were used to determine whether or not the interviewers could identify type of responses for each term in the interview. This questionnaire was developed from the original interview material (Avery, 1980) using responses from various types of reported critical events.

During training the interviewers were also asked to role play the critical events interview. Each interviewer alternatively assumed the role of the interviewer and the interviewee. This technique was used to give the interviewers a sense of the experience of being interviewed as well as practice in administering the interview. Finally, interviewers conducted practice interviews

which were subsequently reviewed in a staff conference. Discussion of other interviews provided the occasion for each interviewer to identify both effective and ineffective techniques and to observe the quality of response resulting from the use of effective techniques.

Training sessions also covered approaches to be used in the event of a subject's becoming emotionally upset during the interview. This possibility was anticipated and did in fact occur in a few interviews. The skills of the interviewers were particularly important in such situations. Furthermore, the interviews frequently became the occasion for the participant's achieving new insights into herself and her life, again calling for the use of the interviewer's skills. As the interviewing process progressed, staff meetings focused on periodic evaluation of progress and identification of difficulties and problems.

INTERVIEW PROCEDURES

The structure of the Critical Events Interview (Avery, 1981) is best characterized as the nonscheduled standardized form described by Richardson et. al., (1965), a model which both establishes classes of information to be obtained and provides for a high degree of individual variation in response. The interviews were standardized to the degree that certain classes of information were desired and these classes were known in advance by the subjects. Interviewers were given some specific probes to use in relation to each term. However, the interviews were nonscheduled in that the interviewers were free to formulate additional questions to elicit the desired classes of information as they saw fit, based on the needs of the individual participant.

All interviews included a review of the purposes of the Women's Educational Equity Act and of this particular project, together with the goals of the interview itself. Emphasis was placed on making certain that the participant understood what was expected of her in the interview and consented to participate on the basis of thorough and accurate knowledge. As part of the interview, participants also were asked to complete a Personal Data Sheet and Subject Release Form. Following each interview, the interviewer completed an interview evaluation form.

All participants in this investigation were volunteers who consented to be interviewed after receiving both oral and written information about the nature of the study. Most interviews were about two hours in length, although a few were completed in one hour.

The following guidelines were mailed to all subjects prior to their being interviewed and have been reproduced verbatim here.

> The goal of this research project is to develop a better understanding of the different ways in which women see themselves -- for example, their r[illegible] in society, life-goals, rights, needs, fears, responsibili[illegible]s and sources of fulfillment. The knowledge gained in this project will then be used to aid counselors as they try to help women in their search for self-understanding and self-determination.
>
> During our interview, we will be trying to find out about the events in your life which have influenced how you see yourself. In other

words, what experiences or happenings or critical events or turning points have made a difference in your feelings and understanding about yourself? These events may be external or internal. That is, they may be something that actually happened to you, or they may take the form of realizations, awarenesses, and other kinds of internal experiences. They may have been associated with positive or negative emotions. They may or may not be known to anyone else or viewed as important by anyone else. There may be few or many of these events that you can recall. Nor do they have to be discussed in the order in which you experienced them. (We can go back and determine that at the end of the interview.)

What is important here, for this interview, is that you see the event as having made a difference in your view of yourself. Please feel free to spend some time before the interview thinking about some of those events in your life. (Make some notes for yourself, if it would help.) You will be called during the next week to set up an appointment for an interview. Finally, rest assured that all information will be strictly confidential.

We greatly appreciate your participation in our efforts. Hopefully, this project will help make counselors and other mental health workers more responsive to the needs of women.

The structure of the interviews was based on the following assumptions:

1. The participant's defensiveness would be minimized if she were allowed to select the time and place of the interview. Therefore, interviews were conducted on the participant's "own territory," her home, place of work, or another place of her choice.

2. Given the freedom to do so, participants would self-select (within the guidelines) what they perceived as the most important material and would omit what they did not view as important. We can be relatively sure that the events identified as critical were in fact so perceived by the participants, even though all perceived critical events would not necessarily have been reported.

3. Participants would select the order of events to be described. Events did not have to be presented in either chronological order nor in order of importance. Self-ordering of events assumes that the participant will begin with less threatening material and, as rapport with the interviewer grows, proceed to more intimate material. At the end of the interview, the woman reviewed her critical events, placing them in chronological order.

4. Participants were told they could use Spanish or English. A few Puerto Rican women occasionally interjected Spanish words or phrases which were translated by the interviewer. Some Puerto Ricans gave certain sections of the interview in Spanish. This material was also subsequently translated by the interviewer.

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW MATERIAL

Investigations which rely primarily on the use of non-scheduled standardized interviews face serious difficulties in the analysis of the material. Such

interviews frequently generate more material than can be analyzed. Consequently, it becomes necessary to extract certain classes of information from the pool of material. In this process, much of the richness of the individual experience may be overshadowed for the moment. Although many women may identify their first job, for example, as a critical event, the universe of meanings each associates with that first job may be quite different. Closely related is the investigator's task of developing some type of quantitive system through which to compare material that is essentially qualitative in nature.

A total of 189 single critical events were obtained from the interviews. The majority of women reported five critical events, although some reported as few as two events.

There was a large discrepancy between the number of events reported by the two Hispanic groups. Only 35 percent of the total events were reported by Puerto Rican women as compared with 65 percent of the total number of events being reported by Mexican-American women. Since there was only one interviewer for each of the two groups, it is impossible to determine whether this difference was due to interviewer variables, or whether it relates to cultural differences in self-disclosure or perceptions of the life process between the two groups of Hispanic women.

Two Hispanic women were trained to code the events. Initially, they were asked to review and to name the events to determine if the coding schema originally devised for white and black women (Avery, 1980) was appropriate for the Hispanic events. After reviewing their names for the events in light of the existing schema, it was evident that the general categories of critical events for the Hispanic women were indeed similar to the coding categories previously established for the study of black and white women.

The coders were trained to determine the types of events to be included in each category. An "other" category was used for events which did not fall into the existing five categories. A complete coding schema illustrating all categories and the particular events included in those categories will be found in Appendix B.

The five categories of events were titled: 1. Relational; 2. Work Related; 3. Educational; 4. Personal; and 5. Health Related. While the great majority (90%) of the critical events could be easily coded into one of these five categories, some events showed dimensions of two categories. For example, events centering on tension between work and family (of which only two were reported) could have been coded under the relational category or under the work related category. In such instances, the event was coded in keeping with the woman's perception of the event insofar as that could be determined from the interview material. Since these particular events (tension between work and family) appeared to be perceived as having more to do with the woman's working than with her relationship to her family, they were coded under the work related category rather than the relational category.

Coders were also asked to add any sub-categories which were needed to adequately reflect cultural differences. The following sub-categories were developed by the coders: in the relational category - extended family events; in the work related category - working with minorities; in the health related category - rape; in the "other" category - immigration; language and culture shock.

Frequencies of critical events, both across and within categories, have been compared by percentages. It should be noted that it is the critical event which was the unit of analysis. In all tables to follow, frequencies and percentages refer to the critical events, not to the participants. Finally, the resources available to the project did not allow for statistical analysis of the critical events data in the light of demographic variables. However, limited comparisions were made between the critical events data and demographic characteristics.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Fifty Hispanic women presently living in the greater Chicago area were interviewed. Twenty-five of these women were Mexican-Americans and twenty-five were Puerto Ricans. Insofar as possible, the Hispanic women were comparable to the 100 white and black women interviewed for the original study in educational level and socio-economic status.

The interviewee Personal Data Sheet included items on age, parent's occupations, education, family income, work history, marital status, number of children and religion, in addition to the following items: length of stay in the United States; plans to continue living in the United States; language(s) spoken in the family of origin; how mother's understanding of women's roles compared to the participants. Complete data on these variables will be found in Appendix A. Although most women responded to all the items, there is some slight variation (between 46 and 50) in the number of responses for each item. Information will be presented initially for the total group of women followed by comparisons between Mexican-American and Puerto Rican women.

The majority of the Hispanic women interviewed (68%) were under 40 years of age. Almost one half (44%) ranged in age from 30 to 39 with an additional 24 percent being under 30. There were 12 percent of the women whose ages were between 40 and 49, 7 percent between 50 and 59 and the remaining 2 percent over 60 years of age. In general, the Puerto Rican women tended to be younger with 80 percent under age 40, in contrast to 56 percent of the Mexican-American women. This fact may have some bearing on comparisons between these groups regarding perceived critical events.

Although the Mexican-American women were a somewhat older group, they appear to be less inclined to be married than the Puerto Rican women. To be more specific, 40 percent of the Mexican-Americans were single, whereas only 24 percent of the Puerto Ricans were single. 12 percent of the Mexican-Americans were separated or divorced while twice as many Puerto Ricans (24%) were. Again, this difference must be considered in light of the critical events that pertain especially to the relational and personal categories.

Thirty-three percent of the Hispanic women had no children, 48 percent had one two or three children and 14 percent reported from three to seven children. The distribution of number of children was fairly comparable for both groups, with slightly more Mexican-American women reporting having no children.

The educational levels achieved by these Hispanic women were high. Asked to specify their highest level of education, 40 percent reported they had completed graduate degrees with another 14 percent having had some graduate courses.

Thirty-two percent reported some education after high school and another 6 percent held a Bachelor's degree. Of the remaining women, 2 percent did not complete high school and the other 2 percent did complete high school (or completed the GED). Both Mexican-American and Puerto Rican women were relatively similar in terms of their educational background. Both groups appeared to represent a rather unique group of well educated Hispanic women.

Information on current occupation and total family income further supports the special nature of this group. With regard to the family income, 77 percent of the Mexican-Americans and 64 percent of the Puerto-Ricans reported over $20,000 per year. Of the remaining Hispanic women, 11 percent reported a total family income of between $5,000 and $12,000 and the other 19 percent had family incomes betwen $12,000 and $20,000.

All of the women were working at the time of the interview or had been previously employed outside the home. Although all the Mexican-American women were working outside the home, 24 percent of the Puerto Rican women were not working at the time of the interview.

In terms of occupation, all of the Mexican-American women were in either professional or technical positions, managerial or non-self-employed official positions, or were self-employed. Fifty-six percent of the Puerto Rican women were working in these areas, 16 percent were in clerical or sales and another 12 percent were full time homemakers.

Interviewees were also asked to specify the occupation of their fathers. The occupations were then classified into the following categories: 1. professional and technical; 2. managerial and non-self-employed officials; 3. self-employed; 4. clerical and sales; 5. crafts and skilled trades; 6. operatives; and 7. unskilled laborers and service workers.

Unskilled laborers and service workers were the fathers of 27 percent of the women interviewed and this category composed the largest occupational group. Twenty-six percent of the fathers were involved in either professional and technical work (8%), managerial or non-self-employed positions (8%) or were self-employed (10%). Crafts and skilled trades represented the occupations of another 12 percent of the fathers. The fathers of the remaining women were either involved in clerical and sales work (2%) or in operative and kindred occupations (6%). Nineteen percent of the fathers were retired and 8 percent were deceased.

The women in this study were also asked to specify the primary occupation of their mother at present. The majority (66%) reported their mothers were employed outside the home, of which 24 percent were unskilled or service workers, 10 percent were self-employed and 8 percent were clerical or sales workers. The percentage of mothers not employed outside the home was fairly comparable between the Mexican-American women (30%) and the Puerto Rican women (36%).

Important differences appeared between the groups with regard to their length of stay in the United States. The Mexican-American women were essentially of two types -- those who have resided here for only a short time (64% here 6 years or less), and those having lived here for a long time (32% here 22 years or more). The Puerto Rican women, however, had a more even distribution of years of stay in the United States. This difference may have some influence on the women's reported intentions to continue their residence in this country.

All Mexican-American women indicated that they intended to continue living in the United States, while 60% of the Puerto Rican women indicated that they intended to stay although 32% reported that they were uncertain. Although the immigration process makes it easier for Puerto Rican women to move between their native land and this country, the differences in intentions to stay suggests that the Mexican-American women have become more adjusted to life in the United States than the Puerto Rican women in this study. In addition, the majority of the Mexican-American women (64%) were raised in homes where both Spanish and English were spoken. However, the majority of Puerto Rican women (68%) were brought up in homes where Spanish was the only language spoken.

The women who participated in this study were asked to reflect upon their perceptions of the differences or similarities between their mothers' understandings of roles and their own. Fifty percent reported role understandings to be different or very different from those of their mothers, 7 percent were uncertain and 35 percent of the total group reported role understandings to be similar or very similar to those of their mothers. Fifty-five percent of the Puerto Rican women as contrasted with 46 percent of the Mexican-American women reported differences in their understandings of women's roles as compared to their mothers' view.

Finally, 86 percent of the Hispanic women in this study viewed religion as important in their lives, even apart from regular church attendance. Ninety-two percent of the Mexican-American women and 80 percent of the Puerto Rican women reported religion as important in their lives.

In summary, these demographic data point to a typical interviewee who was in her thirties. She was as likely to be unmarried (single, separated, divorced or widowed) as married. She had completed at least a Bachelor's degree and was employed in a professional or technical position. Although she was clearly middle class in terms of income level, she was also upwardly mobile and combined the roles of wife-mother and worker.

Those Hispanic women who are now assuming multiple roles, both within the family and within the marketplace, may be viewed as creating life models for the future, models which provide role alternatives and which allow for increasing diversification in life style. The women interviewed here have managed to define for themselves not only different roles, but roles for which the cultural expectations and assumptions are often contradictory. Their identities as Hispanic women allow for the expression of a variety of capacities.

How did they come to define themselves as they do? In the face of contradictory sex-role expectations, how did these women forge for themselves an identity that allows them to participate in both worlds? What are the events which these women, as they reflect upon their lives, perceive as having been meaningful and forceful in the shaping their identities as Hispanic women?

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

The shaping of the Hispanic woman's identity can be demarcated by certain important events which serve as turning points and, more often than not, become the occasion for the re-definition of self as well as for the acquisition of new capacities and skills. These critical events may be thought of as a kind of intersection on the road of adult life, representing a coming together of forces within the person and forces from the outside world. The successful and growth resolution of critical events in the identity formation process of any adult demands the power and capacity to make decisions about the future course of one's existence and the meaning of that existence at a given point in human history. Our lives pivot around such critical events.

This chapter presents the critical events material obtained in the interviews. The focus will be upon the identification of general tendencies or predominant themes within the categories of perceived critical events. In this chapter, total findings are presented initially followed by considerations of the categories separately. Although the complete data upon which this chapter is based will be found in Appendix B, most tables have been included in the body of this chapter. Raw numbers have been converted to percentages for easy comparison across categories. (The reader will note that a column of percentages may not always total 100 percent because of the loss or gain in rounding.

Five categories were empirically developed into which the critical events were grouped. During a preliminary review of the interview material, categories were listed which would encompass the majority of the events. Of the 189 perceived critical events, 10 percent did not appear to fall into any of the five major categories and will be discussed separately. Events were grouped into the following categories:

1. Relational Events
2. Work Related Events
3. Educational Events
4. Health Related Events
5. Personal Events

Table 1 shows the categories together with the raw number of events in each. The percentages demonstrate the proportion of the total number of critical events accounted for by each individual category.

Table 1

Categories Of Critical Events

Category	Number	Percent
Relational	69	36
Work Related	35	18
Educational	24	13
Personal	19	10
Health Related	24	13
Other	18	10
Total	189	100%

Events involving relationships comprised the largest single category of critical events. This finding is not a surprising one and would probably emerge for most women regardless of ethnic origin. However, what is striking particularly in light of the popular notions regarding the identity of the Hispanic woman, is that over half or 64 percent of the reported critical events involve events other than relational. Clearly, while relationships are important in the lives of these women, they are not the exclusive component. The Hispanic women view themselves from many other dimensions aside from the relational and express their personhood in ways other than the traditional roles.

Popular theorizing might suggest that most, if not all, of the significant experiences in a woman's life would have to do with herself in relation to others. In fact, some would go so far as to suggest that women define themselves solely in terms of relationships and the roles that accompany them for their identities. Such is not the case with this group of women for whom 65 percent of the events involved areas of their lives other than relationships.

The next two categories, work related and educational, exemplify the achievement oriented facets of the Hispanic woman's identity. Table 1 shows the categories of work related and educational events following the relational in terms of frequency. Together these two categories constitute 31 percent of the total pool of critical events. When combined and viewed as events relating to the fulfillment of achievement needs, the number of perceived critical events although not equaling the relational (36%) does approximate it. For these women the active, achieving modes are as important as the relational, a finding which is confirmed by other studies of educated women. The pursuit of educational and career goals are of almost equal importance in their view of themselves, again a marked contrast to certain popular images of the Hispanic woman.

The balance of this chapter considers the five categories separately and in order of importance. Specific types of events included in each category are presented and percentages of both the category and of the total pool of critical events are shown in the tables.

RELATIONAL EVENTS

The relational category included all events in which the primary focus involved a relationship between the woman and another person. In those events coded as relational, the major emphasis as the woman described the event in the interview was her relationship with another person. The relational category included relationships with a variety of other persons, most of whom were family members.

Because of the large number of critical events within the relational category, it was divided into prevailing themes to provide more complete insight into the types of relationships that are meaningful in shaping the Hispanic woman's identity. A review of the relational critical events revealed that all but one event could easily be grouped into three themes. These themes were: 1. events involving a relatibnship with a man (other than in the family of origin); 2. events involving motherhood; and 3. events in the family of origin. Table 2 presents the relational critical events by themes.

Table 2

Relational Events By Theme

Theme	Number	Percent of Category	Percent of Total
Relationships With Men	35	51	19
Motherhood	14	20	7
Family Of Origin	19	28	10
Other Relational Events	1	1	3
Total	69	100%	

The largest theme area, relationships with men, included such particular events, in order of frequency, as the end of a relationship (including but not limited to divorce), marriage, marital difficulties and relationships with men other than a husband. This category did not include relationships with men in the woman's family of origin such as grandfather, father, uncle, brother, etc. Events centering on marriage and on the end of a relationship were reported more often than were events relating to marital difficulties. Only two events involving a relationship with a man other than the woman's husband were reported.

Events in the family of origin comprised the second relational theme and included a variety of events in both the immediate nuclear family, as well as in the woman's extended family and kinship network. Also mentioned were difficulties with parents and early experiences with someone who served as role model. Events in this theme area did not always take place during childhood or adolescence. Many occurred in adulthood and point to the strong and continuing bonds between the Hispanic woman and her family, both her immediate family and her extended family.

The third theme area within the relational category was motherhood. Most of these events had to do with becoming a mother and having children although a few events described particularly rewarding or difficult experiences with children.

Before proceeding to a discussion suggesting some tentative interpretations of the findings in the relational category, it is necessary to review briefly some commonly held conceptions, both accurate and inaccurate, of the Hispanic woman, the Hispanic family and the woman in relation to her family. A more thorough discussion of these issues will be found in Mirandé and Enríques (1979), Senour (1977) and Andrade (1980,1981).

Portrayals of the Hispanic family in the popular media have frequently been characterized by the prevalence of both myth and stereotype. All too frequently these myths and stereotypes have been accepted as valid by researchers and writers.

The stereotypical picture of the Hispanic family is frequently authoritarian and rigidly determined by cultural prescriptions. The household is headed by the domineering, macho father and his submissive, docile wife surrounded by as many children as possible. Sex roles are rigidly defined allowing more freedom to males than to females who are presumed to be socialized from an early age to desire little besides marriage and family. In addition, there is the sense of living for the moment, and absence of long range planning particularly in economic matters, a "mañana" attitude toward the problems of the real world. A rather fatalistic acceptance of life is ascribed to prevelant beliefs in Roman Catholicism. Further, the popular images suggest that Hispanics are likely content with their lot and happy in a rather childlike and naive way.

While this stereotypical picture has been exaggerated for emphasis, nevertheless, it is important that it be recognized and confronted lest it form barriers to an accurate and evolving understanding of the Hispanic woman and her family as part of the emerging groups within this country.

A more accurate description of Hispanic families requires attention to the components of that family. "Family" for Hispanics includes not only members of the immediate or nuclear family but also persons in the extended family, kinship networks and to some extent the neighborhood and community itself. Although family members may live at some geographic distance from each other, either in different parts of the United States or in the country or place of origin, there is a sense of psychological and emotional closeness transcending geographic distance. Futhermore, there is a continuing flow of information and persons between Hispanics living in the United States and family members residing elsewhere. Cohen (1977) describes Hispanic households as flexible units which allow family members to move in and out according to their needs and depending upon the life cycle stage of the family and its members.

The strength and flexibility of the Hispanic family structure has important consequences for its members both psychologically and practically. The emotional gratification and support provided by the family as a whole means that the individual is not necessarily dependent upon particular relationships for sustenance. There are many others to whom one can turn in times of crisis and from whom one can receive sustenance and nurturance.

On a practical level, the flexibility of the Hispanic family means that there are alternative places of residence when and if relationships in the current situation become difficult and or trying. Family members can also be counted on to pool economic resources in times of difficulty and come to each other's mutual aid. On a practical level also, the flexibility of the extended Hispanic family provides alternatives for childcare, child rearing and a variety of role models for young Hispanics.

It is important to recognize that the strength and flexibility of the Hispanic family in meeting the needs of its members is not necessarily purchased at the expense of the individuality and personal achievement of its members. It is possible in any cultural group to find numerous examples of situations where a strong sense of family identity contributes to the development of the individual's identity and potential for achievement. Such would seem to be the case with the Hispanic women who participated in this study.

Turning now to a brief consideration of the roles and positions of the Hispanic woman, it is important to note that in most industrialized societies, the activities of women are influenced as much by factors such as educational achievement level, socio-economic status and place of residence (rural versus urban) as they are by tradition and custom. Persons currently writing about the identity of Hispanic women view that phenomena as a changing and dynamic one just as it is for most women in the United States today. Mirande and Enriquez (1979) suggested that although the traditional role of the Hispanic woman in the past may have primarily focused on the maintenance of the family in its various forms, nevertheless the Hispanic woman had and continues to have significant influence in the home, in the extended family and in the neighborhood and community of which she is a part. Her role is a strong and active one. Cohen (1977) documented the major role of Hispanic women in planning and executing the steps necessary for entry and settlement in the United States. Frequently women became the organizers and counselors for family members, mastering not only the tasks necessary for their own immigration but assisting others in those tasks as well.

There is reason to believe that whatever their circumstances, there are traditions of support among women in Hispanic families. Cohen (1977) discussed the importance of the maternal grandmother's caring for children remaining in the home country either until the immigration processes were completed or until a place of residence suitable for the children could be maintained in the United States. More recently Nuttall (1979) examined the support structures of Puerto Rican women who were also single parents and found that female relatives and neighbors were most likely to provide both psychological support as well as practical assistance with child care and the identification of needed community resources.

The findings of this present study of perceived critical events in the lives of Hispanic women shed new light and provide needed insights into the dynamics of the lives of upwardly mobile, educated women of Hispanic origin currently living in the United States. In contrast to the stereotype of the Hispanic woman, defining herself solely in terms of the traditional wife/mother role and dependent upon her husband for approval and direction, it is important to note that although two-thirds of the participants in this study are or have been married, only 19 percent of the reported critical events have to do with

relationships with men. While the marital situations described in the interviews are positive relationships, marriage is certainly not the exclusive focus of these women's lives. Further, although support from the husband for extra-family activities and achievements was important and valued by these women, the Hispanic women are frequently able to turn to other family members for support and encouragement.

Although some of the relational events do center on both marital difficulties and divorce, these interviews do not reveal the patterns of male dominance which the machismo stereotype would suggest. At the time of this study, 18 percent of the participants were either separated or divorced. Gray (1980) reviewed a number of studies showing that professional women tend to have higher divorce rates than male professionals and the general population. Whether that is true for Hispanic women at comparable educational and occupational levels is not presently known. Nevertheless, the fact that these Hispanic women would terminate unsatisfactory marital relationships challenges the stereotype of the docile, passive and submissive wife.

The events focusing on motherhood and experiences with the children provide evidence of other departures from the traditional concept of the Hispanic woman. Of the fifty participants, 38 percent reported having no children, 43 percent had between one and three children and 14 percent had between four and seven children. Although thirty-one of the fifty women did have children, only fourteen critical events were reported in the motherhood theme. Given the levels of educational achievement reported by the women in this study as well as their labor force participation (only six participants were not employed at the time of this study although they had been previously), the number of women reporting no children or small families is not surprising and is comparable to other women of similar education and occupational levels. However, the relatively small number of reported events involving motherhood again challenges the notion of the Hispanic woman defining herself primarily in terms of the maternal role complete with large numbers of children.

The events and experiences described in the motherhood theme revealed warm and positive relationships with children. They also indicated a deliberate effort on the part of the woman to maintain open and honest communication with her children and to convey to them her approachability as someone with whom to share both joys and problems. Many women described a desire to create an atmosphere of communication with their children different from that which they had experienced themselves. There was a sense of wanting their children to have what they did not and of putting aside old taboos.

WORK RELATED EVENTS

The work related category contained thirty-five reported critical events accounting for 18 percent of the total pool of critical events. These events pertained to working outside the home in some way.

Table 3

Work Related Events

	Number	Percent of Category	Percent of Total
Working With Minorities	18	51	10
First Job	6	17	3
Volunteer	4	11	2
Returning To Work	1	3	0
Tension Between Work And Family	2	6	1
Difficulties in Getting Job Or On The Job	2	6	1
Unemployment	2	6	1
Total	35	100%	

In considering the events in this category, it is important to recall that at the time of this study 88 percent of the women interviewed were employed with the remaining 12 percent having been previously employed although not employed at the time of the study. Further, 62 percent of the participants reported occupations in the professions or as technical workers with an additional 10 percent being self-employed. Complete data on the occupational distribution of participants will be found in Appendix A.

The high rate of labor force participation is consistent with the conclusions of Cooney (1975) who found educational level to be the most important predictor of labor force participation for Mexican-American wives. Further, Ayala-Vásquez (1979) emphasized that Hispanic women have traditionally worked with their men in whatever ways were necessary to contribute to the survival of the family unit, and in some cases have been the principal wage earners in their family.

According to Mulcahy (1980), the work activities of Hispanic women outside the home are not necessarily viewed as being anti-family nor as a rejection of the maternal role, but rather as the expression of a desire to participate in both worlds. In addition it must be remembered that the major reason most Hispanics come to the United States has to do with improving the economic and living conditions of the family (Bithorn, 1980). Working outside the home is not a recent experience for Hispanic women even though the true extent of their participation in the labor force has not been accurately documented and represented in labor statistics.

The largest group of events in the work related category has been titled "Working With Minorities", accounting for 51 percent of the events of this category. In these events the focus of the event was not so much on the specific job, tasks or responsibilities performed by the woman, but rather on the setting in which she worked. The vast majority of these experiences involved working in

programs, organizations and community activities within the immediate or extended Hispanic community. A few of the work settings also addressed the needs of other minority groups in addition to Hispanics.

A number of interrelated factors elucidate the importance of these work experiences for Hispanic women. First, the interviews revealed that working within Hispanic settings was for these women a means of both defining their identities as Hispanics within the community and within the larger society and also a way of contributing to the betterment of their people through the solution of common social, economic and political problems. Their work expressed their cultural heritage intergrating it within a dominant society.

Events involved working for the rights of Hispanics and the procurement of legal, educational, economic and social benefits for the community at large. An earlier study by Nuttall (1977) also found Puerto Rican women frequently to be involved in jobs helping other Hispanics in the community solve problems and locate resources. Further, Korrea (1980) stated that the creation and implementation of bilingual education programs provided a wealth of opportunities for Hispanic women whose competencies had been previously unused or underutilized.

Second, the high frequency of work related events having to do with working with minorities in community settings may also be explained by job discrimination confining the Hispanic women's search for employment to her immediate community and rendering movement into the occupational mainstream difficult if not impossible.

Third, it may be that this type of work experience provided a kind of psychological transition for the Hispanic woman into the larger society. In addition to her motivation to contribute to the betterment of her community, there is also the solace and support that comes from working in a setting where persons share similar backgrounds, values and language. There is a sense of being "at home" with one's own people.

The content of these events also reflected the Hispanic tradition of the importance of pursuing issues related to social justice not only for Hispanics but for all peoples as well, and the Hispanic values of altruism, loyalty and commitment. In addition, Hispanic women in particular may experience certain cultural pressures to confine their work to the immediate community.

Finally, it is probable that many Hispanic women may simply not be aware of employment opportunities outside the community because of poor or non-existent vocational and career counseling which would expose them to the breadth of opportunities within the labor force and therefore stimulate a wider range of career alternatives.

Another prominent group of events in the work related category surrounded the woman's first job. For most persons, there is a sense in which the first job constitutes entrance into the adult world and provides the resources necessary for at least some degree of economic independence. For many women today, regardless of ethnic heritage, economic independence is related to, if not the major factor, in the maintenance of psychological independence. The woman who is dependent for her livelihood and well being upon the generosities of others is robbed of control over the circumstances of her own life. Her decision-making capacities are limited and subject to the approval of others.

Finally, it is important to call attention to the relatively few events reported focusing on tension between work and family and on difficulties maintaining roles both within and outside the home. Only two events of this nature were mentioned by this group of women, most of whom were combining the roles of wife and mother and participating in the labor force as well. That so few such events were reported is indeed striking in view of the attention currently given to role conflict and its resolution in the lives of women combining both careers and roles in the home.

It maybe that for these Hispanic women, although work-family tensions and difficulties do exist, they were not viewed as being as significant in their lives as other events. Another possible explanation emerging from the interviews suggests that Hispanic women may have greater psychological capacities for coping with such conflict than do other women of comparable educational and occupational levels.

Discussions during the course of this study with Hispanic project consultants on issues related to role conflict and related areas revealed that from a very early age, the Hispanic female learns to handle and resolve conflicts between individual and family needs in a highly skilled and diplomatic fashion. Because of the immediate presence and influence of many adult female role models, some of whom may be family members while others may be neighbors or members of the community, the young Hispanic girl has myriad opportunities to observe adult women resolving a variety of conflicts in ways which ultimately enhance the well being of the family unit but at the same time insure respect for the individual family member.

Hispanic women learn early to adapt, cooperate and make trade-offs in a family laboratory in diplomacy. The interviews suggest that there is much that other women might learn from Hispanic women about the successful management of roles within the home and careers in the outside world.

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

This category included twenty-four events and represented 13 percent of the total pool of critical events.

Table 4

Educational Events

	Number	Percent of Category	Percent of Total
Elementary-Secondary	12	50	6
College	9	37	5
Returning To School	3	13	2
Total	24	100%	

The women in this study viewed education as the most important means of bettering themselves and as the key to their success. Education was both a goal and a process of great importance. Despite the high levels of educational achievement already attained by these women, many are still involved in the educational process, taking additional courses in a variety of areas. One does not have the sense that even with the completion of a graduate degree, they view their education as being completed or finished.

Education is also considered as a credentialing or certifying procedure where the woman obtains the academic qualifications necessary for the role she has choosen for herself within her community. Although only a few returning to school events were described, the motivation for returning to school involved obtaining the necessary credentials to work effectively for the betterment of the Hispanic community.

Nuttall (1979) studied the support systems and coping patterns of Puerto Rican women who were single parents and reported that education was the primary way or "via regia" to economic improvement. Further, jobs at the paraprofessional level in social and educational agencies created the motivation for further education and the desire to eventually assume professional positions in similar agencies.

Before proceeding to present the critical events data in the remaining categories, it is appropriate to pause and reflect upon the uniqueness of this group of Hispanic women. In view of their high levels of educational and occupational achievement, it may be easy to dismiss them as a priviledged group whose struggles are somehow not centrally related to those of other Hispanic women. However, this does a cruel injustice to the magnificence of their continuing struggles.

These women were not born into families with educated parents. The majority of the participants' fathers were unskilled laborers, service workers or craftsmen in the skilled trades. Their mothers were primarily unskilled laborers, service workers or full time homemakers.

The participants in this study come from homes characterized by poverty, cultural and often emotional deprivation, language and other cultural barriers, from families not only unsupportive of achievement in women, but frequently subjecting their daughters to ridicule and rejection because of educational goals. Many times the circumstances of their early lives forced them to assume adult responsibilities for which they were ill prepared at the time. Their continuing success and pursuit of their chosen educational goals in the face of persistent barriers is overwhelming as well as inspirational. They are strong, self directed and self reliant. Most of all they are clearly in the process of becoming themselves as Hispanic women. They manifest continuing movement toward higher levels of personal achievement and contributions to the community and society in which they live.

HEALTH RELATED EVENTS

Events involving the health of the woman or of significant others in her life accounted for 13 percent of the total number of critical events. The data for health related events are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Health Related Events

	Number	Percent of Category	Percent of Total
Illness Or Death Of Significant Other	18	75	10
Illness Of Self	3	13	2
Rape	2	8	1
Abortion	1	4	0
Total	24	100%	

Three-fourths of the events in this category pertain to the illness or death of a significant other, most often a family member. The significance of the family in Hispanic women viewed the illness or death of significant others as critical events or turning points in their own lives.

Support networks within the Hispanic community maintained both because of cultural traditions and as a survival strategy within a new, strange and threatening society are disrupted by illness or death. Therefore, the Hispanic woman may experience not only a sense of personal loss, but some threat to the overall stability of the functioning of family and community units and to her own identity, it is defined within those social contexts (Coe, 1980).

In particular, the deaths of fathers and grandfathers emerged as events of great import. Although in many cases, the fathers and grandfathers were emotionally distant, authoritarian and sometimes even cruel, they were still accorded reverence and respect. Even though these fathers were not achievers in white middle class terms and although they may have been absent during the woman's childhood because of the necessity of finding work in other places, nevertheless, their deaths produced a variety of major effects upon their daughters. Often the death of the father was the occasion for the surfacing of a broad spectrum of unresolved feelings toward him - anger over his absence and related feelings of early abandonment, resentment at his lack of interest in their achievements, that they no longer had to hide or justify their ambitions nor pretend to be "good" daughters.

But whatever the nature of the feelings, the content of these events clearly revealed the importance of fathers and grandfathers in the lives of these women. Even in cases where the father was cruel or physically abusive, there is a strong sense that even such a father is still the head of the family and valued as such.

The death of a father jolted these women into a new view of themselves, caused them to rethink who they were and freed them to consider new alternatives. It must be noted that while one is struck by the power of those events, both in this and in other categories, in which the father was involved or was the focal point, this power and the accompanying feelings were not evident in events involving the woman's mother. Not only were there very few events involving mothers but when they were reported, the difference in emotional valence is striking by contrast.

Early studies of high achievement oriented white women from homes in which the mother was more likely to assume the traditional role pointed to the significance of the woman's relationship with her father as a major factor contributing to the development of high achievement needs. It may be that similar dynamics are at work here, albeit within a different cultural context.

The importance of religion may also be a factor in the Hispanic woman's view of death. Sixty-two percent of the Hispanic women described religion as "very important" in their lives with an additional 24 percent describing it as "fairly important". Moreover, for members of the Hispanic community, no individual in the kinship group suffers alone. The emotional and mental stress that accompanies a physical illness is shared by all in the immediate and extended family and sometimes includes traveling back to the original homesite to provide care to the seriously ill or support during bereavement and readjustment.

Relatively few events of the "Illness of Self" type were reported. However, those were serious, long-term and potentially terminal. Considering that 68 percent of the Hispanic women in this study were 40 years of age or younger, it may be that they have not experienced serious illness in any great frequency. It may also be that personal illness is not nearly so disruptive to their lives and therefore not so likely to be identified as a critical event because of the strong sense of family support and confidence of being able to rely on other family members for care and the continued maintenance of family functions.

PERSONAL EVENTS

The personal category contains 10 percent of the total critical events. However, the nineteen events coded under this category are particularly interesting since for the most part they represent internal as opposed to external happenings. That is, these events tend to be occurrences which "took place" within the woman and which involve her thoughts and feelings about herself and her life. Table 6 presents the data for the events in this category.

Table 6

Personal Events

	Number	Percent of Category	Percent of Total
Awareness Through Support Group	6	32	3
Re-evaluation of Self, Decision to Assert Self	4	21	2
Need For Independence, Freedom, Career	4	21	2
Body Image	2	11	1
Fear of Incompetence, Insecurity	2	11	1
Lack of Fulfillment In Married Life	1	5	0
Total	19	101%	

While the number of events in this category is small when contrasted with the preceding categories, attention to the events subsumed in the personal category help to round out the picture of the Hispanic woman. While these events are not the broad sweeps of color in the portrait, they are the delicate accents of color bringing the image into clearer focus and shedding new light upon the meanings of the events in the larger categories.

Six events best described as "Awareness Through Support Groups" revealed that despite the prominence of the family as a source of support for Hispanic women, support groups are also found outside the family although most often within the broader Hispanic community. These few events revealed changes in levels of personal awareness, self insight and understandings of self in relation to the world perceived as resulting from participation in the support group.

The second type of personal event involved the re-evaluation of self, the decision to assert self or to change some part of her life. As these events were reported during the interviews, the process described did not so much involve a change in the external circumstances of the woman's life as they did in her personal perceptions of herself. These events also reflect an emphasis on taking charge of one's life, exerting control and power over the future course of one's existence. The evaluation and clarification of life goals were meaningful regardless of the consequences (i.e. regardless of what the woman was or was not able to do subsequently). The change in outlook from being powerless to powerful was the focus of the event.

Four events in this category focused upon the woman's need for such things as independence, freedom or a career. The tone and spirit of these events emphasizes the woman's own needs. She did not view them as resulting from negative attitudes or behaviors on the part of her husband nor did she as somehow indicating that there was something deficient within her marriage or her roles within the family.

One of the questions that arises in the consideration of the total pool of critical events viewed in the context of the demographic characteristics of this group of Hispanic women has to do with the nature of their motivation as they struggle in the face of overwhelming obstacles such as cultural differences, language barriers, poverty, the disruption of moving, inadequate early academic preparations, assuming responsibilities for the care of younger siblings early in their own lives as well as cultural heritages which although placing high value on the roles of women as wife and mother, do not necessarily encourage high achievement outside the family.

How did these women do it? How did they achieve the levels of educational and occupational accomplishment reported? Earlier the importance of the extended family was discussed. These women found support for their goals from someone either within the family, although not necessarily their parents, or from a person or group within the larger Hispanic community.

While such support is certainly necessary, it is hardly sufficient to explain the complex phenomena manifested in the lives of these women. There is a sense of self reliance and self direction evident through all the events, but most sharply focused in the events of this category. The Hispanic woman's self reliance appears to be born of and nurtured by the early exposure to conflicts in various forms, within the family itself, between sexes and between the values of the dominant society and those of the Hispanic traditions.

The content of these interviews indicated that Hispanic women learn as young girls to manage conflict successfully and to continue to struggle despite obstacles. The successful resolution of early difficulties and the early mastery of survival skills provides the basis for the courage and self reliance necessary as they make their way into leadership positions within their communities and within the larger society.

OTHER CRITICAL EVENTS

Earlier in this chapter it was mentioned that eighteen (10%) of the critical events obtained during the interviews did not fall into any one of the five major categories. Those events are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Other Critical Events

	Number	Percent of Total
Immigration, Language-Culture Shock	6	3
Moving, Traveling	7	4
Racism	5	3
Total	18	

Six critical events were reported which focused primarily upon the immigration processes and acculturation experiences including language problems and culture shock. An excellent account of the roles of Hispanic women through the many phases of the immigration processes has been provided by Cohen (1977) including the entry and settlement stages, the characteristics of immigrant households and the strong commitment of Hispanic women both to work as well as to the reshaping of social structures both in this country as well as in their home countries. The requirements and the complexities of the immigration process point to the need for careful and long range planning, for the identification of economic, psychological and social resources and for courage, daring and hope in the face of the unknown.

The 7 critical events titled "Moving-Traveling" differed from those above in that they involved either moving and traveling within this country or the home country, or traveling between this country and the home country.

Moving and traveling frequently involve exposure to new social environments, mores and values. As such they become an occasion for the questioning of previously held notions about self and about the conduct and meaning of human life.

Many of these events described visits back to the woman's home city or village in Mexico or Puerto Rico, frequently on important family occasions such as weddings, births, deaths or serious illness. Moving and traveling, for whatever the reasons, call forth new adaptive capacities from the individual and

demand the integration of new information about the world and about one's self in relation to that world. Returning to the homeland and interacting with relatives and friends was for these women a time of refocusing upon their own lives and for increased clarification of their identities as Hispanic women in a bicultural setting.

Events titled "Racism" included both actual experiences as well as those involving increased awareness of prejudice and discrimination. In light of the myriad barriers this group of Hispanic women have overcome, it is surprising that there were not more such events reported. It may be that the experience of prejudice and discrimination is viewed as such a commonplace occurrence and is so much a part of everyday life that it would not be reported as a critical event. Nevertheless, these events raise the question of the degree to which the awareness of being a minority group member and the resolution of the feelings born in the wake of the realization are part of the identity formation process of all persons relegated to second class positions within a society. Through experiences such as those described in these events, the Hispanic woman's position in the universe and the corresponding limitations upon her aspirations and achievements were made painfully clear.

Before concluding this consideration of the racism events, an additional perspective is necessary not only to fully understand these events themselves but to grasp the broader context of the identity formation process for Hispanic women. Although these events were experienced and reported by persons who are both Hispanic and women, they are clearly perceived as being racially rather than sexually based, that is as experiences of racism rather than of sexism or both.

Hispanic women are more likely to see discrimination as resulting from being Hispanic than from being women, and as relating to factors such as poverty and class status. Moreover, the struggle for Hispanic rights and position within the dominant society is perceived as one to be shared with Hispanic men. Even acknowledging the effects of machismo, the Hispanic woman does not view men as the cause of her oppression. Rather, the causes are rooted in the racially based policies and practices of the dominant society of which Hispanics both men and women, are the victims. The reader is referred to Gonzales (1977) and to Mirandé and Enriquez (1979) for a comprehensive consideration of these issues.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

In the preceding chapter, the total findings from this study were presented and discussed. The purpose of this chapter will be to attempt some comparisons which will place the findings in perspective and thereby draw out meanings not completely evident before.

Two types of comparisons will be made. First, the findings from this study will be compared with those obtained in a previous study of white women reported in Critical Events Shaping Woman's Identity: A Handbook for the Helping Professions, (Avery, 1980). This comparison will provide a benchmarking reference with the largest segment of women in the United States today.

The Hispanic women interviewed were selected so as to approximate the white women interviewed in the previous study in terms of educational level and income. In fact, more white women (82%) reported having completed at least a Bachelor's degree or beyond as compared with 60 percent of the Hispanic women interviewed. Eighty-two percent of the white women reported total family incomes of $20,000 or more whereas 70 percent of the Hispanic women interviewed reported that level of family income. However, despite the proximity of educational levels and of family incomes, the Hispanic women interviewed were much more unusual than the white women when compared with the total populations of Hispanic women versus white women in the United States today. In other words, while educated, middle class white women represent a select group when compared to the majority of Hispanic women living in the United States today.

The fact that the majority of both the white and the Hispanic women had completed a college degree and reported family incomes of $20,000 per year or above suggests that broad similarities in the findings will emerge. As minority persons move into the middle class, they tend to share the values of the greater society and to some extent, ethnic or racial affiliations are not so apparent. In this instance, while the relative importance of the six categories of perceived critical events is similar for both groups of women, there are variations in the specific kinds of events encompassed within each category. Further, there are some types of events reported by Hispanic women which were not mentioned by white women and vice versa. In the tables to follow, those events reported only by white women are indicated with an asterisk (*) whereas those events reported only by Hispanic women are indicated by a double asterisk (**).

The second type of comparison to be made in this chapter will be between the findings for Mexican-American women and for Puerto Rican women. It should be noted that while an equal number (25) of women from each group were

interviewed and a total of 189 critical events were reported, 65 percent of 122 of those events were reported by the Mexican-American women while 35 percent or 67 events were reported by the Puerto Rican women. Events have been compared by percentages to show their relative importance to the two groups. Nevertheless, these findings should be viewed with caution in light of the differences in numbers of events reported by the two groups.

Table 8

Categories Of Critical Events

	White		Hispanic	
Category	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Relational	161	38	69	36
Work Related	70	17	35	18
Educational	68	16	24	13
Personal	54	13	19	10
Health Related	30	7	24	13
Other	37	9	18	10
Total	420	100%	189	100%

Table 8 shows that by and large the percentages of critical events reported were similarly distributed among the six categories for both white and Hispanic women. The relational category was the largest single category, accounting for 38% and 36 percent of the events mentioned by white and Hispanic women respectively. Clearly, the identity formation process for both groups of women has been shaped by relationships with significant persons in their lives. More interesting to note, however, is the fact that the percentages of critical events involving relationships were not larger. Sixty-two percent and sixty-four percent of the critical events reported by white and Hispanic women respectively involved areas of their lives other than relationships.

Overall, the similarities in distribution of critical events across the categories for white and Hispanic women point to shared experiences shaping the identities of these women regardless of their cultural heritages. Nevertheless, there were important differences between the groups within the categories and those differences will be compared in the remainder of this chapter.

RELATIONAL EVENTS

Although there was similarity between the two groups in percentages of events involving relationships with men the two remaining relational themes indicated important differences.

Table 9

Relational Events By Theme

Theme	White		Hispanic	
	Number	Percent Of Category	Number	Percent Of Category
Relationships With Men	89	55	35	51
Motherhood	50	31	14	20
Family Of Origin	18	11	19	28
Other Relational Events	4	2	1	1
Total	161	99%	69	100%

First, differences were evident between the groups in the theme of motherhood. That is, 31 percent of the relational events reported by white women fell into the motherhood theme whereas only 20 percent were so classified for the Hispanics. This difference may in part reflect group differences in terms of the percentage of women having children (95% of the white women had children, while 62% of the Hispanic women had children).

Second, 28 percent of the Hispanic relational events involved experiences in the family of origin. On the other hand, only 11 percent of white relational events were coded in this fashion. Thus it appears that these Hispanic women were not so focused upon their children and on their role as mother within the nuclear family as were white women of comparable socio-economic levels. For Hispanic women, the continuing influence of the family of origin (including the extended family) was evident in contrast to white women who have been socialized to value the nuclear family over the family of origin.

Table 10 presents a comparison of the specific events within the relational category. Several differences between cultural groups are worthy of note.

Table 10

Relational Events

Event	White		Combined Hispanic		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Marriage	34	21	12	17	8	20	4	13
Marital Difficulties	21	13	8	12	3	8	5	17
End Of Relationship	8	5	13	19	4	10	9	30
Intimate Relationship With Man Other Than Husband	8	5	2	3	1	3	1	3
*Difficulties With Man	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
*Event In Husband's Life	11	9	0	0	0	0	0	0
*Extramarital Sexual Experience	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Motherhood	30	19	10	14	8	20	2	7
Rewarding Experiences With Children	1	1	3	4	3	8	0	0
Difficulties With Children	19	8	1	1	1	3	0	0
*Good Relations With Parents	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Difficulties With Parents	3	2	4	6	2	5	2	7
*Sex Bias In Family	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Experience In Family	5	3	6	9	3	8	3	10
Role Model	5	3	1	1	1	3	0	0
**Extended Family Event	0	0	8	12	4	10	4	13
*Friendships With Women	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
*Difficulties With Women	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Difficulties With Co-Workers	1	1	1	1	1	3	0	0
Total	161	99%	69	99%	39	101%	30	100%

Hispanic women reported a greater percentage of events (19%) dealing with the end of a relationship than did white women (5%), with the larger percentage of events being reported by Puerto Ricans (30%) as opposed to Mexican-Americans (10%). Puerto Rican women also mentioned a larger percentage of events involving marital difficulties than did Mexican-American women (17% vs 8%). While these differences may be due to marital status (76% of the Puerto Ricans and 60% of the Mexican-Americans are or have been married), these findings may also reflect varying group perceptions of the woman's role and rights within the marriage.

In those events involving motherhood and children, Mexican-American women reported a total of twelve events as compared with two such events reported by Puerto Rican women. However, more Puerto Rican women (68%) had children than Mexican-American women (56%). The importance of the mother role is not only more pronounced for the Mexican-American woman, but it also appears to approximate the earlier findings for white women. Twenty-eight percent of the relational events reported by white women involved motherhood and children as compared with thirty-one percent of the relational events reported by Mexican-American women. However, it is essential to recall that the Puerto Rican women were generally younger than the Mexican-American women and the white women. The Puerto Rican women at this time in their lives may be more concerned with marital relationships, education and career than with their role as mother.

Finally, whereas white women identified numerous events involving difficulties with their children, only one such event was reported by the Hispanic group. The Hispanic women were more likely to mention rewarding experiences with their children.

Events involving the extended family accounted for 12 percent of the relational category events for Hispanic women and were equally distributed between Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans. No events of this type were reported by white women. Conversely, Table 10 indicates several types of relational events reported by white women which were not mentioned by Hispanic women.

Table 11

Work Related Events

Event	White		Combined Hispanic		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Volunteer	7	10	4	11	3	13	1	8
First Job	25	36	6	17	5	22	1	8
*Changing Jobs	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
*Quitting Work	8	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Returning To Work	6	8	1	3	1	4	0	0
Tension Between Work And Family	13	19	2	6	0	0	2	17
Difficulties Obtaining Job Or On The Job	2	3	2	6	0	0	2	17
Unemployment	2	3	2	6	0	0	2	17
*Retirement	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
**Working With Minorities	0	0	18	51	14	61	4	33
Total	70	100%	35	100%	23	100%	12	100%

WORK RELATED EVENTS

Table 11 presents data for the work related events for white, Mexican-American and Puerto Rican women. Although the first job, representing the opportunity for economic autonomy and the promise of fulfillment, was an important event in the lives of the four groups of women, it held greater meaning for whites over Hispanics and for Mexican-Americans over Puerto Ricans.

In the previous chapter, those events involving working with minorities were discussed. The percentage of such events reported by Mexican-American women was nearly twice as large as that reported by Puerto Rican women. This difference may reflect variance in exposure to job opportunities outside the Hispanic community and perhaps a greater motivation on the part of Mexican-American versus Puerto Rican women to work for social change.

Events related to tension between work and family responsibilities accounted for only 6 percent (all reported by Puerto Ricans) of the Hispanic work related events as contrasted with 19 percent for the original group of white women. Given the high percentage of these women both with families and employed, it was surprising that more such events were not reported.

Other group differences appear to be related to motivation for work. White women were more concerned with job transitions, quitting or changing jobs, or returning to work while Hispanics, or rather Puerto Ricans almost exclusively, reported more with difficulties obtaining work and unemployment. Variances here may reflect situational differences. Married white women (84% were married), work to supplement their family income, and thus are freer to move from job to job or to stop working if the activity is not rewarding. The income of the Hispanic women (48% were married), on the other hand, is frequently necessary for family maintenance and thus Hispanic women do not readily consider quitting or changing jobs. In addition, Hispanics have not had as many work opportunities and therefore were forced to compromise in job choice or face unemployment.

Another explanation for the Hispanics not mentioning events involving job transiency relates to the prominence of the "working with minorities" events. When describing these events, the women viewed their work as contributing to the betterment of their community and eventually to the larger Hispanic society. In many cases, the women were employed in businesses and agencies within their own community thus their loyalty to the job. Many Hispanic women in this study worked both because of economic need and also because of their dedication to social cause.

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

A total of twenty-four or 13 percent of the critical events described by Hispanic women dealt with educational experiences. As in the previous two categories, about an equal percentage of educational events were reported by whites and Hispanics.

Table 12

Educational Events

Event	White		Combined Hispanic		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Elementary-Secondary	6	9	12	50	11	58	1	20
College	23	34	9	37	6	32	3	60
Returning To School	24	35	3	13	2	10	1	20
*Quitting School	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
*Women's Studies	11	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	68	100%	24	100%	19	100%	5	100%

Looking at the total number of Hispanic educational events, it should be noted that Mexican-Americans related almost four times as many events in this category as did Puerto Ricans. This might be expected given the fact that the Mexican-Americans were not only older but more of them had also completed a college or graduate program.

Whereas the majority of educational experiences identified as critical events by the Hispanic women took place during their elementary, secondary and college years, the bulk of events for white women involved quitting or returning to school as well as experiences in Women's Studies programs. In other words, the Hispanic women appear to have been more influenced by earlier educational experiences than by those occurring in adulthood.

The prominence of educational experiences in the elementary, secondary and college years may be understood as an expression of the unusual nature of this particular group of Hispanic women vis-a-vis Hispanic women as whole.

A comparison of the occupations of the Hispanic women interviewed with those of their fathers revealed a highly upwardly mobile group somewhat more so than for the white women from the original study and certainly substantially more so than Hispanic women in general. Education, particularly during the early, formative years is the key to rapid upward mobility. Because of the very high achievement motivation evidenced by the occupational and educational accomplishments of these Hispanic women, it would be reasonable to suppose that these Hispanic women as young girls grew up in situations where education was valued as the key to upward mobility, even if there also were prohibitions on achievement and education for girls.

Several of the early educational events reported by the Hispanic women involved language and cultural difficulties in school. Others revealed situations in which present achievements and future goals were challenged and ridiculed. Still others portrayed the influence of a special teacher who encouraged the development of potential. Taken as a whole, the early educational experiences,

whether of a positive or negative nature, were occasions when these Hispanic women confronted and reaffirmed their commitment to their own education while at the same time becoming more keenly and painfully aware of the personal costs involved.

While experiences in Women's Studies programs emerged as important for white women, such experiences were not mentioned by the Hispanic women. However, a close examination of the content of the interviews indicated some parallels between this group of events for white women and the events involving working with minorities which were so important to the Hispanic women in the preceding work category. Both groups of events reveal processes wherein the women were searching for some greater sense of themselves and for greater participation in their collective identity. These experiences were also times of rising consciousness of their status within the larger society and inaugurated the processes through which they were subsequently able to confront and resolve the feelings associated with the awareness of second class status.

HEALTH RELATED EVENTS

Although the percentages of events contained in each of the preceding categories was quite similar for both white and Hispanic women, the health related category contained a percentage of events for Hispanic women (13%) almost twice that for white women (7%). On the other hand, events in the personal category accounted for a greater percentage of the total number of critical events for white women (13%) than for Hispanics (10%).

Table 13

Health Related Events

Event	White		Combined Hispanic		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Illness Of Self	19	63	3	13	2	11	1	17
Illness/Death Of Significant Other	10	33	18	75	13	72	5	83
Abortion	1	3	1	4	1	6	0	0
**Rape	0	0	2	8	2	11	0	0
Total	30	99%	24	100%	18	100%	6	100%

Illness of self was reported much more often by white (63%) than by Hispanic (13%) women; illness or death of significant others was identified as a critical event more often by Hispanic (75%) than by white (33%) women. In terms of the Mexican American and Puerto Rican groups, the percentages are similar for both types of events, despite the fact that Mexican Americans reported three times as many health related events as Puerto Ricans. Abortion was

only mentioned by white and Mexican American women, whereas rape was reported only by Mexican Americans.

The significance of the extended family is a major consideration in understanding why Hispanics viewed the illness or death of significant others as critical events in their own lives. The importance Hispanics place on their parentage and family of origin was previously evidenced by white Americans as well. As late as the turn of the century, when large numbers of the white workforce were employed in agricultural and related occupations and were often immigrants or their immediate descendants, they too revered the family of origin. Many households were comprised of children, parents, grandparents and other relatives. For both economic and social reasons, close relationships were maintained.

Today, white Americans are more likely to be independent from their original families. Hispanics are presently the major immigrant group, many from agrarian backgrounds where parentage is highly esteemed and close bonds are maintained. Therefore, serious illness or death within the family is more likely to be viewed as a critical event for Hispanic as opposed to contemporary white women.

While white women reported a far greater percentage (63%) of health related events involving their experience of serious illness than did Hispanic women (13%), it is not possible from these data to determine whether the white women actually experienced more severe illnesses than did this group of Hispanic women. Nevertheless, the illnesses described were long term and potentially terminal necessitating drastic adjustments in self perception, role definition and life style. Either the Hispanic women have not experienced serious illnesses with the same frequency as the white women, perhaps because of their younger overall ages, or such illnesses have not been as disruptive to their sense of identity as they were for the white women.

PERSONAL EVENTS

The events coded under this category for the most part represented internal moments of self awareness. The fact that the percentages of personal critical events for white (13%) and Hispanic (10%) women are comparable suggests that women, regardless of cultural background, consider awarenesses within their private selves as important processes in the development of their identity.

Table 14

Personal Events

Event	White		Combined Hispanic		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Need For Independence Freedom, Career	10	18	4	21	2	17	2	29
Lack Of Fulfillment In Married Life	22	41	1	5	0	0	1	14
Fear Of Incompetence, Insecurity	2	4	2	11	1	8	1	14
Awareness Through Support Group	10	18	6	31	4	33	2	29
Body Image	2	4	2	11	1	8	1	14
Re-Evaluation Of Self, Decision To Assert Self	8	15	4	21	4	33	0	0
Total	54	100%	19	100%	12	99%	7	100%

The most prominent difference between the groups was seen in events describing a lack of fulfillment in married life reported with greater relative frequency by white women (41%) versus only 5 percent by Hispanics. White women revealed a desire to "get more out of life." Apparently, white and Hispanic women approach marriage from different perspectives. Within the Hispanic cultures, women may have more realistic expectations of the marriage relationship and of the roles of wife and mother. On the other hand, white women may demand more from marriage and thus experience greater disatisfaction when their expectations are not met.

Further, the family unit is a primary value for Hispanics and therefore women may be willing to withstand more adversity in order to maintain the conjugal relationship. The importance of the extended family and of the community also means that the Hispanic woman has sources of personal and social fulfillment other than her marriage readily available to her. For example, note the difference in percentages of events involving awareness through a support group; it is greater for Hispanics (31%) than for whites (18%).

Both white and Hispanic women reported similar percentages of events related to the need for independence, freedom and/or a career (18% vs 21%). Moderate differences in percentages were evident for events describing the re-evaluation of self and the decision to assert self, fears and feelings of incompetence or insecurity, and changes in body image.

OTHER EVENTS

A similar percentage of all critical events reported by white (9%) and Hispanic (10%) women did not fit easily into any of the five major categories previously discussed. Table 15 shows these events included experiences with moving and traveling, with discrimination and with immigration, language and culture shock.

Table 15

Other Events

Event	White		Combined Hispanic		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Moving, Traveling	25	68	6	33	5	45	1	14
*Sexism	12	32	0	0	0	0	0	0
**Racism	0	0	5	28	3	27	2	28
**Immigration, Language Culture Shock	0	0	7	39	3	27	4	57
Total	37	100%	18	100%	11	99%	7	99%

Recognizing that moving and traveling, for whatever reason, may be the occasion for the evaluation of both old and new environments and value systems as well as the opportunity for the development of new adaptive skills, it is not surprising that these events were salient incidents in these women's lives. In the case of white women, the moving events generally involved a husband's job transfer and brought to light her second class status within the marriage. That is, it was assumed that she would disrupt her life to move in pursuit of her husband's goals and that her involvement in the community, her career and her friendships were just not as important. For Hispanics, more moving/traveling events were reported by Mexican Americans as opposed to Puerto Ricans.

A very important group of events, immigration and language culture shock was identified only by the Hispanics and was discussed in greater detail in the preceding chapter. However, it is interesting to note that Puerto Ricans reported a greater percentage of events (57%) of this type than Mexican Americans (27%), a somewhat surprising finding in light of the differences between the two groups regarding relocation considerations and procedures. Further, while all of the Mexican American women reported planning to continue their residence in the United States, only 60 percent of the Puerto Rican women reported such intentions.

Events related to sexism and racism were reported exclusively by white (32%) and Hispanic (28%) women respectively. The tendency of Hispanic women to view discrimination as racially rather than sexually based was discussed in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

The women whose lives are mirrored through this study cannot be considered typical of Hispanic women in the United States at this time in history. Nevertheless as the Hispanic population increases over the coming years and as Hispanics organize themselves for continuing emergence into the mainstream of American society and its institutions, these women and others like them will assume positions of leadership providing direction, insight and courage to the larger Hispanic communities seeking new ways to define their individual and collective identities.

The women in this study may be thought of as the foremothers of numerous achievement oriented Hispanic women who will follow in their footsteps as greater and greater numbers seek further education and entrance into professional and managerial occupations. As these women shared the important experiences of their lives, the picture which emerged may be taken as an indication of the future. These findings and their implications will provide insight into the dynamics of the lives of coming generations of Hispanic women and will suggest guidelines for practitioners, educators and researchers.

In chapter three, the critical events by categories were discussed. However, another way of considering these data is in terms of the individual events themselves regardless of the category into which they were coded. Those single critical events mentioned most often have been selected and presented with corresponding percentages of the total number of critical events. Table 8 presents the single events in descending order of frequency.

Table 8

	Number	Percent Of Total
Working With Minorities	18	10
Illness Or Death Of Significant Other	18	10
End Of Relationship With Man	13	7
Elementary Or Secondary School Experience	12	6
Marriage	12	6
Motherhood	10	5

Presenting the data in this form accentuates some conclusions which were suggested briefly in chapter three.

1. The most apparent conclusion from reviewing these data was that there are no single events which were critical for all the Hispanic women. In fact, there was no single event which was reported by even half of the women interviewed.

2. These data would seem to fly in the face of the mythology that Hispanic women define themselves primarily in terms of their relationships with others and in particular through the roles of wife and mother. While relational events were certainly important, by no means did they account for the majority of events. More striking was the number and proportion of events having to do with areas of life and experiences other than relationships.

3. There was a balance between events of a relational nature and events of an achievement nature initially noted in chapter three where relational events accounted for 37 percent and achievement events (work related and educational) accounted for 32 percent of the total pool of reported critical events. If indeed the capacity to love and to work define being an adult, the Hispanic women in this study not only partake of both the productive and the relational but also perceive the contribution of each area to the shaping of their identities. However, since the expectations for each type of activity are different and often conflicting, and since both areas are of major importance to these women, potential conflicts now and in the future may be predicted. The feeling of being torn in two directions both of which are perceived as being central to one's identity is a state which is and will be a part of women's lives for some time to come. All the more reason why members of the helping professions must be prepared to help Hispanic women manage the conflicts arising from a society which makes the pursuit of a fully adult human identity difficult for minority women.

4. While these data by no means suggested that marriage was central to these women's lives, the events describing either marriage or the end of a significant relationship, primarily through divorce, point to the importance of such relationships for Hispanic women as well as to the difficulties in maintaining them for high achievement women of Hispanic origin. Further, the fact that 32 percent of the women interviewed were single may confirm the relationship difficulties faced by Hispanic women pursuing demanding educational and career goals. Achievement oriented Hispanic women may simply have less time and energy for marital relationships, the conflicts involved in maintaining roles within and outside the home may be perceived as too overwhelming and the availability of male partners of comparable educational backgrounds may be limited. The prevalence of such phenomena among black women with high achievement goals has been well documented and the situation would appear to be comparable for Hispanic women.

5. The interview material pointed to the strong and continuing influence of the family in its many forms upon the lives of Hispanic women. The impact of the family was reflected even in those groups of events outside the relational category as in the large number of events describing the illness or death of a significant other in the woman's life. Clearly, one major factor in understanding the Hispanic woman involves viewing her in the context of her family, the immediate family, the family of origin, the extended family and the kinship

network. As increasingly large numbers of Hispanic women assume varying roles outside the home, the family will continue to be the primary source of both psychological and practical support.

6. The findings of this study challenged the popularly held and stereotypically based notions about the Hispanic woman. Rather the picture which emerged here revealed women who are not only bicultural but multi-role as well. These women have evolved for themselves both perspectives and positions which allow them to participate in the traditions of their ancestral cultures and in the functions of the urban, post-industrial society. As a unique synthesis of past and present, their lives mirror the futures of Hispanic women to come. On many dimensions, such as choosing the single lifestyle and having smaller families, they are comparable to white women of similar educational and occupational levels.

7. Despite the differences in types and levels of occupations between the women in this study and their mothers, not all participants perceived their present understandings of themselves as women and their definitions of their roles as women to be different from those of their mothers. Although half did report role perceptions to be different from those of their mothers, 35 percent reported that their role perceptions were similar to those of their mothers while 7 percent were unsure. The Puerto Rican women were more likely to report differences in role understandings. To the degree that differences in type and level of occupation are indicative of differences in role definitions, it is curious that 35 percent of these Hispanic women reported similarity to their mothers' role definitions. This finding suggests that for some Hispanic women, female role perceptions are influenced by factors other than occupation.

The identity formation process is ongoing and for most healthy adults the universe of meanings which constitute their identities is both stable and changing. Change must occur in the healthy, mature and growing adult and critical events are grist for the mill, the occasions for stretching toward previously unimagined dimensions of self.

For Hispanic women at this point in history, the circumstances of their lives are changing, perhaps too slowly for the expectations of some, perhaps too rapidly for the adaptive capacities of others. But none would dispute that such changes are real and are here to stay. On the other hand Hispanic women themselves are changing in terms of their perceptions of themselves and of the world in which they live and to which they contribute.

The changes in the roles and responsibilities of Hispanic women today are clearly reflected in the types of critical events reported by the participants in this study. Members of the helping professions will recognize many of those critical events, for often the confusion, fear and anxiety generated by them are sufficiently severe to require professional assistance.

The successful and growthful resolution of critical events in the identity formation process becomes the occasion for the birthing of new capacities and competenties. In a sense, critical events in the lives of Hispanic women clients are critical times for their counselors and therapists as well. The response of the helping professional can either reinforce debilitating racial and sexual stereotypes thereby robbing the woman of the precious opportunity to move toward self-determination, or can facilitate the pushing back of limits and the rebirth of identity.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study of perceived critical events in the lives of contemporary Hispanic women has not been to formulate rigid or "cookbook" approaches to the provision of counseling and related services. Rather the goal has been one of providing a broad perspective of the lives of Hispanic women in such a way that members of the helping profession may see implications for their continuing research and practice. Hopefully, the findings of this study will serve to raise more questions than they answer and therefore will stimulate the formation of new hypotheses toward the increased understanding of and sensitivity to the magnificent variety evident in the identities of Hispanic women today.

The implications to be discussed in this chapter have been grouped into three topical areas: 1. implications for counseling and therapeutic practice; 2. considerations of the role of the counselor, service delivery, and training; and 3. implications for continuing research.

An excellent and comprehensive consideration of the mental health needs of Hispanic Americans and of women in general may be found in the Report of the President's Commission on Mental Health (1978), which presents thorough and current information on the status of mental health, delivery of mental health services, training and manpower issues, directions for future research and mental health prevention strategies.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the implications of this study, it is necessary to re-emphasize the great diversity to be found among Hispanic women in terms of socio-cultural as well as demographic characteristics. While these differences point to varying mental health needs and treatment approaches, nevertheless there are common problems and general conclusions which can be identified both in terms of practice and research.

It is important to bear in mind that political and economic factors contribute to the social milieu within which the practice of counseling and therapy, the delivery and structure of services, the training of helping professionals, as well as research in the social and behavioral sciences takes place. Hispanics are the emerging minority group within the larger society. Projections indicate that within the next twenty-five years, Hispanics will constitute the largest minority group within the United States. The continuing Hispanic struggle for power and resources will increasingly be evident in demands for resources, representation, participation and self-determination, demands which persons who take their social status for granted may have difficulty understanding and addressing. In addition, the various groups comprising the Hispanic population may organize themselves separately and this separation may frequently be exploited.

Members of the helping professions, whether policy maker, practitioner or researcher must respect, if not understand the multitude of factors affecting the delivery of counseling and mental health services to Hispanics. Hispanics themselves, and in this case, Hispanic women, are the most likely possessors of the knowledge about their lives and problems necessary to advance their general health as well as levels of achievement and ultimate contributions to their communities and to the society at large. If the mental health systems of this society are truly to meet the needs of the Hispanic populations, they must increasingly rely upon the knowledge and recommendations of those groups to guide the formation of policy and the provision of services.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

The following implications for the practice of counseling, therapy and related services with Hispanic women clients are based on the findings of this study together with a review of pertinent literature.

Perhaps the best way of establishing a perspective through which to approach the counseling of Hispanic women is to consider their past, their present and their futures, for all of these are involved in the identity of the individual Hispanic woman. Earlier the importance of the Hispanic cultural traditions of the past were discussed. It is important to view the Hispanic woman in the light of these traditions of the past, but the practitioner must be careful not to be limited by them, for indeed the Hispanic woman, although respecting them, is not limited by them. Rather, the traditions of the past serve as the foundation upon which her identity as a bicultural person rests.

In her present status, the Hispanic woman is emerging and shares with women of other cultural heritages the struggle to find new lifestyles which value both the traditional roles within the family and, at the same time, allow for the expression of achievement needs in the community and larger society.

In the future, as increasing numbers of Hispanic women pursue further education and assume leadership positions in the professions, in the business world and in communities, issues such as role conflict, dual career marriages, isolation and the expression of power needs will confront both client and counselor.

The importance of recognizing the role of Hispanic culture and traditions cannot be overemphasized. Counseling approaches which view the Hispanic woman client as separate from her social and cultural context will do little to contribute to the success of her present quest for fulfillment as an individual, a family member and a citizen of the larger society.

The Report of the President's Commission on Mental Health (1978) identified Hispanic women as a group at high risk with regard to emotional problems primarily because of the sharp contrast between traditional Hispanic values regarding sex role differentiation and current and rapid changes within American society regarding women's roles in general. The Report further suggested that the acculturation process produces more anxiety in Hispanic women than it does in Hispanic men. This is not to imply that sex role definitions are necessarily more rigid for women than for men, but rather to emphasize that the contrast between the traditional roles and the newly emerging roles is greater for Hispanic women than it is for their male counterparts. The psychological distance the Hispanic woman must traverse inorder to establish and maintain roles within the dominant culture is greater than for Hispanic men.

While many of the problems faced by Hispanic women wishing to preserve their traditional roles within the family and pursue career or other achievement oriented activities outside the family are common to all women at this time in history, nevertheless there are some issues unique to Hispanic women.

Hall (1972) developed a model of coping with role conflict which identified three types of coping, relating each to overall satisfaction with managing both family and career roles. Gray (1980) discussed Hall's model and its implications for counseling women who desire both a profession and a family. The style of role conflict coping most related to satisfaction involved a process of negotiating with others (family, employer) toward the redefinition of demands and expectations placed upon the woman. This process of negotiation is particularly important for the Hispanic woman. Her role conflicts are most likely to be successfully resolved when both she and her family perceive her efforts as contributing to their total welfare. In this way, the Hispanic woman's family cooperates in the decision making process and views her success as their success. The Hispanic woman should be encouraged to use the resources of her family, both immediate and extended, as support in the pursuit of her goals. Recall from earlier discussions that these support structures are available within Hispanic families or within the larger Hispanic community.

Another related issue frequently arising in counseling Hispanic women desiring to pursue educational and occupational roles outside the home is her feelings of isolation. Because at this time in history so few Hispanic women have yet moved into major roles outside the home, the Hispanic woman often feels alone as she may well be the first woman in her family to attempt such achievements. Family members may see her as being too independent, too ambitious or too Anglo. She may be accused of abandoning her cultural heritage in favor of adopting the values of the dominant society. It is important for the practitioner to recognize the depths of her commitment both to her family and its traditions as well as to her own individual goals.

The counselor can assist not only by providing direct support but by assisting the Hispanic woman client in finding support groups of other Hispanic women with similar goals. Maintaining contact and interacting with other Hispanic women, even though these women may not be family or immediate community members, provides continuing linkage with her cultural identity. These groups are also a source of role models which may be few and far between in the original neighborhood.

The findings of this study clearly revealed the strength of the Hispanic woman in overcoming numerous obstacles in the pursuit of her own personal goals while at the same time maintaining a sense of her identity in a bicultural setting. This strength born of mastery of the skills necessary for survival in a climate of oppression is also shared by black women and was evidenced in an earlier study of perceived critical events in the lives of black women (Coe, 1980). While the inner strengths of these women must be respected, nevertheless the practitioner must be mindful of the fact that they have often been sustained at the price of successful relationships with men and sometimes of the woman's health as well.

Beneath the strength is often anger and rage both at the injustice of a system which devalues capacities because of skin color or ethnic heritage and a tremendous sense of the unfairness of having to struggle so long and so hard. Although the lives of these Hispanic women evidence significant accomplishments

in the face of overwhelming barriers, the real question would ask what these women might have been able to accomplish had the obstacles been fewer and the struggles not so intense, so continuing and so pervasive.

Hispanic women such as those depicted in this study may indeed be burning the candle at many ends. Stress management techniques must be a part of any counseling program for minority women today. The resilience evidenced in the Hispanic woman is not a well which never runs dry, but rather one to be constantly replenished if she is to continue to pursue her goals in the face of many barriers.

Ayala-Vásquez (1977) discussed the guidance and counseling of Hispanic females, outlined the traditional values of Hispanic societies and suggested that those counseling approaches which will be most effective emphasize cooperation, working with others, respect, loyalty and responsibility. Sena (1977) further supported the provision of services which emphasize cooperation rather than competition. This suggests that techniques such as group counseling might be preferable in some instances to traditional individual counseling. This would further suggest the value of utilizing group exercises and techniques where participants work together toward the definition and solution of common problems.

The Hispanic woman has frequently developed broadly based and highly complex skills in diplomacy and in conflict resolution. The effective practitioner will build on those skills and help the client recognize their application in educational and occupational settings. The Hispanic woman may view the use of those skills as confined to family situations and need assistance in recognizing their usefulness not only to other problem areas of her own life, but also as skills much needed by contemporary society and its institutions.

In counseling the Hispanic woman, the practitioner has other persons available as resources. Sometimes an intervention may be handled by a friend, relative or neighbor. The client can be supported in requesting such an intervention. For example, when helping a Hispanic woman cope with role conflict and negotiate her family's expectations, a trusted friend or relative might be asked to talk initially with the woman's husband. The rich, social resources of the Hispanic community allow both the counselor and the client many other avenues aside from direct confrontation. While the counselor may not always understand the kinship system, the client does understand that system and can learn to use it effectively toward the resolution of many difficulties. In fact, she has probably been doing that most of her life and will continue to do so with help and support from the counselor.

Finally, whatever the nature of services offered, it is crucial that the Hispanic woman client participate fully in the making of her own decisions and the resolution of her own conflicts. While a paternalistic attitude on the part of the practitioner is not productive for any client, when the client is also a member of a racially oppressed group, the counseling process must be one in which the client is self directed. Thus the counseling process itself contributes to the growth and mental health of the client through the process of empowerment

In addition the Hispanic woman must be allowed to determine her own rate of progress and change. The practitioner must always be mindful of the fact that regardless of how much he or she knows about Hispanic cultures and Hispanic

women, nevertheless the ebb and flow of forces shaping the Hispanic woman's identity and her choices pursuant to that changing identity are best known to her. The wise practitioner will respect that knowledge whether it has been fully articulated or not.

ROLE OF THE COUNSELOR

Although recent years have witnessed increasing emphasis and attention both to psychological and social science research on issues effecting the lives of women and increasing responsiveness on the part of the helping professions to the needs of women (Moore and Strickler, 1980), there are particular groups of women the dynamics of whose lives are yet to be understood and appreciated, and for whom effective services contributing to their growth as persons remain to be developed.

Foremost among these groups of women yet to be understood, much less served, are minority women. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that most psychological studies of minority women as well as recommendations for services have been directed primarily to the needs of lower class or poor minority women. While the needs of these women cry out for understanding and healing, nevertheless the needs of those minority women pursuing higher education and training must be addressed as well for in many instances these women themselves will become the helping professionals who will in turn assist less fortunate minority women in their quest for a better life.

Attention to the needs of minority women has been emphasized in the Report of the President's Commission on Mental Health (1978) and by the Committee on Women of the American Psychological Association (1979) in its principles concerning the counseling and therapy of women. The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision further called for policies, procedures and activities to improve counseling services for all non-white persons (McFadden, 1979). More recently, a review of existing programs for training counselors of women pointed to the absence of training models integrating both racially and sexually based issues and thereby comprehensively address the counseling needs of minority women (Johnson and Richardson, 1980).

While most recommendations on issues relating to the provision of counseling and other mental health services to women in general as well as to minority group members, consistently emphasize the importance of a shared cultural background between the practitioner and the client, in the case of Hispanics (and probably other minority groups as well) such a situation would appear at this time to be impossible. The Report of the President's Commission on Mental Health (1978) stated that only .5% of the labor force in the areas of psychiatry, psychology, psychiatric nursing and social work were Hispanic persons. The Report further projected that the representation of Hispanics in the mental health professions will stabilize or even decline in the future. In light of the population projections for Hispanics in the near future, it is obviously impossible for the small number of Hispanic counseling and mental health practitioners to provide the services necessary for the increasing Hispanic population.

The shortage of Hispanic practitioners suggests at least three approaches. First, Hispanic persons must deliberately be recruited and retained in the

counseling and mental health professions. Second, service delivery systems may increasingly rely on the use of trained paraprofessionals. And finally, in many instances counseling and mental health services will be provided by non-Hispanics. Therefore, in programs serving communities with Hispanic populations, practitioners will need to expand their knowledge of and deepen their sensitivities to the varying needs of Hispanic clients.

One of the prevalent myths regarding the provision of counseling and mental health services to Hispanics suggests that Hispanics (and sometimes members of other minority groups) do not or will not utilize such services. Such thinking is neither accurate nor helpful.

The question is rather what kinds of services will be utilized and will be most effective with Hispanics, and what are the characteristics of the providers of those services. Simply because some Hispanic persons do not always utilize traditional services or traditional forms of service delivery is not a basis for assuming that they will not use services of a different type or programs presented through new delivery systems.

A recent study of ethnic perceptions of mental health service providers (Schneider, Laury and Hughes, 1980) reported that Chicanos and black community college students were more likely than whites to discuss personal and emotional problems with members of the helping professions. Discussing the use of mental health services by Hispanic women, Carrillo, Gibson, and Estrada (1979) identified three major factors related to limited utilization of traditional mental health services by Hispanics. Those factors were geographic inaccessibility, language barriers, and social class and cultural barriers. In considering the provision of services to upwardly mobile Hispanic women, such as those described in this study, the obstacles tend to be focused on class and cultural barriers.

Ayala-Vásquez (1977) pointed out that for the practitioner counseling the Hispanic woman or girl desirous of educational and occupational advancement, two important goals must be kept in mind. Those goals were helping the client understand herself as a Hispanic female and helping her learn how to cope with a world in which she is doubly handicapped by being female as well as by being Hispanic.

It may be that both women as well as members of racial and ethnic minority groups will continue to prefer a practitioner of similar background to themselves if and when such persons are available. However, client preference for similar background may not necessarily pertain to all stages of the client's life cycle nor to all kinds of problems or difficulties.

The important point is that practitioners must be aware of and sensitive to the needs of clients from different cultural backgrounds. Initially practitioners must identify and confront their own personally held stereotypes or misconceptions. Familiarity with existing research on the psycho-social development of minority persons and the application of that knowledge to practice is required. Some would even recommend that all counselor trainees take at least one course in cross-cultural counseling (Casas and Atkinson, 1981). For established practitioners within the counseling and mental health professions, there are a variety of continuing education opportunities available through professional conferences and meetings.

The role of the effective practitioner in educational and career counseling requires remembering that frequently Hispanic women have rather restricted information on the world of work, knowledge which has come through family, community and in some cases through the educational system. Hispanic women must be exposed to a wide variety of occupational choices as well as to resource information which will allow them to evaluate and implement their potential. In many cases, the role of the practitioner is one of providing information and resources which may be unknown to the Hispanic woman client.

Considering the high percentage of reported critical events focusing on "Working with Minorities", the practitioner should bear in mind that an occupation which allows for service to the community may be a paramount consideration in the vocational choice process of the Hispanic female. It is important for the counselor to assist the Hispanic female client in discovering the ways in which an occupation may be used within the Hispanic community but also in other settings as well.

If the women in this study exemplify future generations of Hispanic women, they will view education as an ongoing process in their lives. The Hispanic woman will make considerable sacrifices in the pursuit of her education and her career goals and the counselor must assist her in locating the necessary resources identifying educational programs. Hispanic women view formal education as a continuing and life long process. The counselor needs to be aware of this view and facilitate her planning for long range educational goals over her life span.

Finally, the role of the practitioner with both women clients and clients of racial ethnic minority backgrounds must also be one of a social change agent. This role involves recognizing and helping the client to recognize both internal and external barriers to the pursuit of full personhood. It further implies assuming an active position on issues of policy and practices effecting the progress of emerging groups within the larger society. Although the counselor of Hispanic women must consider the effects of discriminatory practices, both racially and sexually based, such factors must not be used to justify the modification of aspirations. Counseling must empower the Hispanic woman to understand herself as a bicultural person and to develop effective strategies for mastery of her goals. An insightful discussion of the relationships between sex, race and class in the context of counseling theory and practice will be found in, "Sex, Race, and Class: Three Dimensions of Women's Experience," (Griscom, 1979).

RESEARCH

Recent and comprehensive reviews of existing research and related literature on both Hispanics in general and Hispanic women in particular consistently and emphatically conclude that it is not only fragmented but also fraught with the perpetuation of stereotypes and myths.

The Report of the President's Commission on Mental Health (1978) identified four primary factors contributing to the inadequacy of existing research on Hispanics, factors also reflected in the conclusions and recommendations of others.

First, until recently, theories and models in the social and behavioral sciences have been ethnocentric in nature. The application of these constructs in reserach with Hispanics has ignored the relevance of sociocultural and linguistic differences between Hispanic and Anglo cultures, and has thus resulted in the proliferation of stereotypic interpretations having little, if any, ecological validity.

Second, there has been a failure to systematically investigate intra group differences. Hispanics are not all alike and differences must be taken into account before issuing sweeping generalizations.

Third, there has been a failure to identify and account for a complex interdependence of structures among psychological, sociological, anthropological and biological factors. The holistic approach requires that these dimensions be jointly considered in order to avoid oversimplistic and inaccurate generalizations.

Fourth, there has been a failure to research Hispanics in the context of the macroculture in which they exist, namely, twentieth century American society. Too often they have been portrayed without regard to the interactive processes that affect not only their own cultural systems, but also those of other ethnic groups that constitute the contemporary sociocultural milieu. (p. 903).

The importance of these limitations for existing research on the Hispanic woman has been further reinforced by the conclusions of the Conference on the Educational and Occupational Needs of Hispanic Women (1980). More recently, Andrade (1981) reviewed existing literature in the social sciences on Mexican-American women and called for the reformulation of research approaches and methodologies so as to overcome stereotypic cultural expectations and allow for the emergence of a more accurate picture of the Chicana within the varying contexts of her life. The procedures employed in this study allowed these Hispanic women to speak for themselves about the critical events in their lives and thereby to contribute to the development of more accurate, contemporary understandings which challenge stereotypes and myths.

Turning now to specific implications for research growing out of this study, the following are some areas for further investigation, both for their ability to inform the practice of counseling, therapy and other related services with Hispanic women as well as for the determination of policy in educational and social institutions serving Hispanic women.

1. Reviewing the findings of this study, the reader is consistently and continually impressed with the high educational and occupational goals these Hispanic women actively and successfully pursued in the light of overwhelming obstacles. This study only suggests some sources of their motivation and perseverance including factors such as support both within the family and the extended community, early exposure to conflict and its successful resolution, the strong commitment to improving self and concomitantly, family and community. To the degree that these women are models for future generations for Hispanic women, a more thorough understanding of the developmental processes which provided the necessary motivation and strength for goal achievement will be invaluable in planning future programs and services for other Hispanic women.

2. The women in this study have clearly been able to integrate traditional, cultural backgrounds with roles in contemporary society allowing them to move beyond traditional roles. How these Hispanic women forged new identities for themselves and what the stages in that process are also constitute areas for further research.

3. Obviously, the Hispanic women participating in this study have been influenced by contemporary changes in women's roles. However, the fact that the majority (68%) are or have been married would indicate substantial changes in Hispanic men's perceptions of both women's roles of their own roles. While this study focused upon Hispanic women, it is apparent that to some degree the roles and attitudes of the men in their lives have changed also. Changing relationships between Hispanic men and women is an important area for further research, the resluts of which will inform the practice of marriage and family counseling and related services to Hispanics.

4. On the other hand, 32 percent of the women interviewed in this study were single. Since the study sought Hispanic women participants of relatively high educational and occupational levels, the proportion of single women may suggest that Hispanic women desirous of pursuing high achievement goals may find it difficult, if not impossible, to pursue those goals and at the same time maintain a marriage. Some Hispanic women may decide early in their lives that both marriage and career are not possible, or that the time and energy needed to pursue educational and career goals in the face of persistent barriers does not leave the emotional resources necessary for marriage and family.

5. The meanings of "family" in its varying forms and its diverse influences upon the life cycle of the Hispanic woman need to be more fully understood. It is evident, both from this study and from other studies, that the family for Hispanics includes several groupings including the family of origin, the immediate nuclear family of spouse and children, the extended family, the kinship network and that the meaning of "family" in some way also extends to the neighborhood, immediate community and the broader Hispanic community. There is no question of the importance of "family" in the lives of Hispanic women, but exactly how the varying "families" influence decisions and precisely at which points and under what conditions they are most likely to impact upon those decisions needs to be fully investigated.

6. The findings of this study revealed that Hispanic women are extremely skilled at finding ways to successfully make the trade-offs necessary to preserve both their traditional roles and to achieve within the larger society. A more complete understanding and exploration of the attitudes, skills and strategies used daily by Hispanic women would be enormously helpful to women of all ethnic backgrounds struggling to bridge the gap between home and career. These Hispanic women have indeed found ways to have, if not the best, at least satisfying parts of both worlds to the degree that such goals, although often contradictory, are possible within the structure of today's society. If this is the case, these Hispanic women can truly be models for other women by demonstrating effective means of role conflict resolution.

These are only a few of the more apparent implications for further research suggested by the findings of this study. One of the purposes of this study was to generate new hypotheses and suggest areas for additional investigation. It is assumed that readers of this publication will see myriad other implications for their own research and practice which will contribute to the emergence of a more accurate and enlightened understanding of the lives of Hispanic women at this time in history.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

ETHNIC GROUP (N=50)	Combined		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Puerto Rican	25	50				
Mexican American	25	50				
	50	100				

AGE (N=50)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Below 30	12	24	7	28	5	20
30 -- 39	22	44	7	28	15	60
40 -- 49	3	16	5	20	3	12
50 -- 59	7	14	5	20	2	8
60 or Over	1	2	1	4	0	0
	50	100	25	100	25	100

WORK STATUS (N=50)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Employed At Time Of Interview, Including Self-Employed	44	88	25	100	19	76
Not Employed At Time Of Interview Although Previously Employed	6	12	0	0	6	24
	50	100	25	100	25	100

HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMMENT (N=50)	Combined		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Did Not Complete High School	2	4	0	0	2	8
Completed High School Or GED	2	4	1	4	1	4
Some Education After High School, But Not College Degree	16	32	7	28	9	36
Bachelor's Degree	3	6	3	12	0	0
Some Graduate Courses	7	14	3	12	4	16
Completed Graduate Degree	20	40	11	44	9	36
	50	100	25	100	25	100

PRESENT OCCUPATION (N=50)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Not Currently Working	1	2	0	0	1	4
Professional & Technical Worker	31	62	19	76	12	48
Manager & Non Self-Employed Official	3	6	2	8	1	4
Self-Employed	5	10	4	16	1	4
Clerical & Sales Worker	4	8	0	0	4	16
Crafts & Skills Worker	1	2	0	0	1	4
Operatives & Kindred Worker	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unskilled Laborer & Service Worker	2	4	0	0	2	8
Full-Time Homemaker	3	6	0	0	3	12
	50	100	25	100	25	100

MARITAL STATUS (N=50)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Single	16	32	10	40	6	24
Married	24	48	11	44	13	52
Separated	3	6	0	0	3	12
Divorced	6	12	3	12	3	12
Widowed	1	2	1	4	0	0
	50	100	25	100	25	100

NUMBER OF CHILDREN (N=50)	Combined		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
None	19	38	11	44	8	32
1	8	16	3	12	5	20
2	11	22	5	20	6	24
3	5	10	3	12	2	8
4	2	4	0	0	2	8
5	3	6	1	4	2	8
6	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	2	4	2	8	0	0
	50	100	25	100	25	100

TOTAL FAMILY INCOME (N=47)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Below - 5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
5,001 - 12,000	5	11	0	0	5	20
12,001 - 20,000	9	19	5	23	4	16
20,001 - 30,000	18	38	9	41	9	36
30,001 - 40,000	11	23	6	27	5	20
40,001 and Over	4	9	2	9	2	8
	47	100	22	100	25	100

OCCUPATION OF FATHER (N=49)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Professional, Technical	4	8	2	8	2	8
Manager, Non Self-Employed Official	4	8	0	0	4	17
Self-Employed	5	10	2	8	3	13
Clerical, Sales	1	2	0	0	1	4
Craft, Skilled Trade	6	12	4	16	2	8
Operatives	3	6	3	12	0	0
Unskilled, Service	13	27	6	24	7	29
Retired	9	19	16	24	3	13
Father Deceased	4	8	2	8	12	8
	49	100	25	100	24	100

OCCUPATION OF MOTHER (N=50)	Combined		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Has Never Been Employed	17	34	8	32	9	36
Professional, Technical	1	2	0	0	1	4
Manager, Non Self-Employed Official	0	0	0	0	0	0
Self-Employed	5	10	3	12	2	8
Clerical, Sales	4	8	3	12	1	4
Craft, Skilled Trade	2	4	0	0	2	8
Operative	1	2	1	4	0	0
Unskilled Laborer, Service	12	24	5	20	7	28
Other	8	16	5	20	3	12
	50	100	25	100	25	100

COMPARISON OF MOTHER'S UNDERSTANDING OF RULES, RIGHTS OF WOMEN (N=46)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Mother Died Early - No Memory	3	7	1	4	2	9
Very Different	14	30	5	21	9	41
Different	9	20	6	25	3	14
Not Sure	4	7	2	8	2	9
Similar	9	20	6	25	3	14
Very Similar	7	15	4	17	3	14
	46	99	24	100	22	101

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION (N=50)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Very Important	31	62	15	60	16	64
Farily Important	12	24	8	32	4	16
Not Sure	3	6	0	0	3	12
Farily Unimportant	1	2	0	0	1	4
Unimportant	3	6	2	8	1	4
	50	100	25	100	25	100

PLAN TO CONTINUE LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES (N=50)	Combined		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Yes	40	80	25	100	15	60
No	2	4	0	0	2	8
Uncertain	8	16	0	0	8	32
	50	100	25	100	25	100

LENGTH OF STAY IN THE UNITED STATES (N=50)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Under 6 Years	22	44	16	64	6	24
7 to 12 Years	6	12	0	0	6	24
13 to 21 Years	5	10	1	4	4	16
22 Years and Over	17	34	8	32	9	36
	50	100	25	100	25	100

LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN IN FAMILY OF ORIGIN (N=50)	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Spanish Only	25	50	8	32	17	68
Spanish And English	24	48	16	64	8	32
English Only	1	2	1	4	0	0
	50	100	25	100	25	100

Appendix B

CATEGORIES OF PERCEIVED CRITICAL EVENTS

CATEGORY	Combined		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Relational	~~69~~	36	39	32	30	45
Work Related	35	18	23	18	12	18
Educational	24	13	19	16	5	7
Personal	19	10	12	10	7	10
Health Related	24	13	18	14	6	9
Other	18	10	11	9	7	10
	189	100	122	99	67	99

RELATIONAL CATEGORY EVENTS BY THEME	Combined		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Relationships With Men	35	51	16	41	19	63
Motherhood	14	20	12	30	2	6
Family Of Origin	19	28	10	26	9	30
Other Relational Events	1	1	1	2	0	0
	69	100	39	99	30	99

RELATIONAL EVENTS	Combined		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Marriage	12	17	8	20	4	13
Marital Difficulties	8	12	3	8	5	17
End Of Relationship, Divorce	13	19	4	10	9	30
Intimate Relationship With Man Other Than Husband	2	3	1	3	1	3
Motherhood/Grandmotherhood	10	14	8	20	2	7
Rewarding Experiences With Children	3	4	3	8	0	0
Difficulties With Children	1	1	1	3	0	0
Difficulties With Parents	4	6	2	5	2	7
Experience In Family	6	9	3	8	3	10
Role Model	1	1	1	3		
Extended Family Event	8	12	4	10	4	13
Difficulties With Co-Workers	1	1	1	3	0	0
	69	99	39	101	30	100

WORK RELATED EVENTS	Combined		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Volunteer	4	11	3	13	1	8
First Job	6	17	5	22	1	8
Returning To Work	1	3	1	4	0	0
Tension - Work/Family	2	6	0	0	2	17
Difficulties In Getting Job Or On The Job	2	6	0	0	2	17
Unemployment	2	6	0	0	2	17
Retirement						
Working With Minorities	18	51	14	61	4	33
	35	100	23	100	12	100

EDUCATIONAL	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Elementary-Secondary	12	50	11	58	1	20
College	9	37	6	32	3	60
Returning To School	3	13	2	10	1	20
	24	100	19	100	5	100

PERSONAL EVENTS	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Need For Independence, Freedom, Career	4	21	2	17	2	29
Lack Of Fulfillment In Married Life	1	5	0	0	1	14
Fear Of Incompetence, Insecurity	2	11	1	8	1	14
Awareness Through Support Group	6	31	4	33	2	29
Body Image	2	11	1	8	1	14
Re-Evaluation Of Self, Decision To Assert Self	4	21	4	33	0	0
	19	100	12	99	7	100

HEALTH RELATED EVENTS	Combined		Mexican American		Puerto Rican	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Illness Of Self	3	13	2	11	1	17
Illness/Death Of Significant Other	18	75	13	72	5	83
Abortion	1	4	1	6	0	0
Rape	2	8	2	11	0	0
	24	100	18	100	6	100

OTHER CRITICAL EVENTS	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Moving, Traveling	6	33	5	45	1	14
Racism	5	28	3	27	2	28
Immigration, Language-Culture Shock	7	39	3	27	4	57
	18	100	11	99	7	99

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